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Editorial

Choosing Our Future

The memory of the recent events in the country, and especially the black tragedy in the capital when the winter was setting in remains fresh in our minds as we start the New Year. Those events have shaken the foundations of our community and our trust in our own humanity and have filled us with troublesome questions about the future of our country. The national ideal of a secular, democratic socialist republic has been seriously threatened. Yet many were those who even in the darkest hour showed a remarkable civic and indeed spiritual maturity even at their own risk, and the country as a whole has also shown its resilience in holding the national elections. At heart it knows that it has no other future to choose but the ideal expressed in the Preamble of our Constitution. This holds for us a hope which, after the recent events, calls for a stronger commitment to the task ahead of us with a purified vision. The task is the creation of a nation where a common brotherhood and sisterhood is a reality, where the pluralistic community with the richness of its legitimated differences is accepted and built on the foundations of social justice, as envisaged in our Constitution.

Can the Church choose its future? The Church in India has no other future and cannot but make this ideal of the country its own mission, and contribute to the building up of such a polity from the resources of its religious heritage and faith. The VIDYAJYOTI journal hopes to contribute its mite to this task by offering in its pages a continued reflection on our multifaceted commitment and the clarifications that such a vision for the future calls for.

Within the purview of a pastoral theological reflection the journal would like to keep in close touch with the burning issues of the Indian society and the Indian church, without however neglecting the basic questions that touch the world-wide community and the universal church. At this moment when a change of those who hold immediate

responsibility for the journal occurs, we will do well to restate its purpose as was formulated in 1974:

> We would like to address our journal to all those who fulfil a 'ministry' in the Church, and who exercise responsibility and leadership in the community, whether they belong to the Clergy, the Religious or the Laity. The review is at their service. It will offer them a forum where they can share experiences, discuss problems, reflect over their Christian life of witness and service today in India. It will keep them informed of developments in other local Churches and in the universal Church. It will mediate to them the ministry of Indian theologians in their work of prophetic and critical reflection.

As we enter into 1985, several themes call for our attention. Besides the recent national events, on which this issue offers a first humble reflection, the International Year of Youth calls for a Christian contribution on the theme. The Catholic church will also be engaged in a meditation on the laity, in preparation for the Synod of Bishops that will meet in 1986. It will be important to reflect theologically on the theme, remembering that it invites us to accept the whole church as "lay", i.e., as the "laos" or holy people of God that must express in its own inner life the mystery of fellowship, equality and coresponsibility of all its members (cf. canon 208).

The recent document of the S. Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith on some aspects of liberation theology also calls for a critical reflection on the concerns of liberation and justice in a developing country like India. We hope in the course of the year to be able to present some articles on certain basic issues raised by the document and our own situation, so that the Gospel becomes credible as a message of freedom and a force for a new society in our country.

As we announced in the editorial of August 1984, there has been a re-structuring of the editorial responsibilities for the journal. The editorial board will now be constituted by the permanent staff of Vidyajyoti, Delhi, and Ms Pearl Drego and Fr George Kureethra of the Delhi Archdiocese. The board has elected Fr S. Arokiasamy as Chief Editor, and Frs T. K. John and G. Gispert-Sauch as assistant editors. The latter will also act as secretary of the journal. Besides the editorial board a larger advisory board has been constituted which will act as the mouthpiece of the public to the review. The names of its members may be found in the inner cover page of the journal, and we are specially happy that the ecumenical collaboration begun in the past will continue in the future too.

But the journal is the responsibility of all the readers. As already mentioned we would like it to continue to be a forum open for the reflection of all. We are happy to receive letters expressing the

readers' reaction, comments etc., and when possible or demanded by the subject-matter, we publish them. We also welcome contributions and shall endeavour to share them with our readers in the measure of our possibilities. There is another area on which we would request the collaboration of our readers. Our journal lives on its subscriptions. Besides the timely payment of each one's subscription (to be sent to Xavier's Publications, Ranchi), we need urgently a larger number of readers. We believe that there are many people in India, from the laity, the religious and the clergy, who would find the journal stimulating and helpful if they are led to discover it. We believe, too, that many readers abroad are interested in the reflection and life of the Indian church and will be happy to receive the journal. Would it be possible for each reader to become a publicizer of the journal and to obtain at least one more subscription? We invite all our readers to help us in this, and in other directions.

S. AROKIASAMY, S.J.
Chief Editor

In This Issue

This month's articles focus on questions of inter-cultural an in'er-religious dialogue Fr M AMALADOSS offers us a lecture he gave on how inculturation and a new theology are born out of a dialogue at the level of praxis Fr Lancy LOBO pleads for an inculturation at the level of the "little tradition" of India and shows how it could be promoted In a sample of theological reflection arising from the experience of a living dialogue with Hindus, Sr Sara GRANT raises an important question about the theology of Christian initiation to which we invite the attention of theologians Fr C. W. TROLL points out the scope of the "inner dialogue" between Christians and Islam. The January theme of ecumenism is touched upon in some important contributions in our Book Review section.

Culture and Dialogue

M. AMALADOSS, S.J

THERE is a growing awareness among us Christians today of th implications of the pluralism of cultures for evangelization The Gospel is not tied to one culture, but has taken and ca take many cultural expressions Encountering a culture, it incarnate itself in it, promoting the good and purifying the imperfect elemer and thus making it new This natural process had been hindered f various reasons, which we need not go into here, during the recent centuries It is now being rediscovered and affirmed Goals, conditions, processes and implications of such inculturation of the Gospel are being analysed and reflected upon

There is also an increasing realisation that we are living in a religiously and ideologically pluralistic world In this context we are not only called to witness to Jesus and his good news We are also challenged to dialogue with the living faiths and ideologies, expecting to discern more about how God is active in our world, and to appre ciate for their own sake the insights and experiences people of othe faiths have of ultimate reality "[1]

Both these movements inculturation and dialogue – must b seen 'in the context of shared responsibility (of all men) for a commoi future based on mutual respect, equal rights and equal obligations "[2] It is in this situation that I would like to reflect with you on the implica tions of inculturation in the context of dialogue with other living faith and ideologies I am already interpreting, I hope rightly, the term 'culture' and 'dialogue' in the title proposed to me Though incultu ration and dialogue have been analysed and reflected upon, it is rarel that their way of life and *sadhana* (spiritual pursuit) This tended t be an elite activity Contact with the people, the poor and a certai impact of the theology of liberation made me see inculturation as a integral process of building up a new humanity (the Kingdom), in whic proclamation dialogue and liberation had their place and which I a called to collaborate with all men and women of good will (Thoug

1 'Issues for the Church and the WCC Witnessing in a Divided World no 44 in David Gill (ed), *Gathered for Life*, Geneva, 1983, p 40
2 *Ibid*, no 47, p 41

am speaking in the first person, I represent a whole generation of Indians).

This experience has helped me to understand more deeply the meaning of inculturation. In the beginning I was theorizing in the abstract about the encounter between Gospel and culture. But, in practice, the Gospel comes to us in its European cultural expression so that inculturation appears as a process of inter-culturation. Furthermore the culture which the Gospel is encountering is itself the expression of a particular religious tradition, so that inter-culturation includes within itself an inter-religious encounter. Failure to understand the implications of this last dimension leads one to look for secular elements in culture as the only proper object of inculturation and to misunderstand other people who take the whole of the living culture seriously as being guilty of syncretism. Finally, in a world dominated by science and technology and by secular ideologies of the right and the left, dialogue can become a call and an opportunity to a collaboration to uphold common human and religious values as the basis and inspiration of a given culture.

Inculturation understood in this manner is made a difficult project in the contemporary world owing to many factors. I shall mention just three, interrelated ones. All religions are under the pressures of the forces of modernisation. Their response however is varied, and unsure of themselves, they become defensive. Secondly, when traditional cultural structures seem to disintegrate in a fast changing economic and political climate, religious loyalty appears as a source of group cultural identity and this leads to fanatic, fundamentalist currents. Thirdly, at least in my country, Christianity still wears a colonial face and, when it is not actively opposed or looked at with suspicion, is marginalised as one more sub-caste.

These are aspects of my experience. My understanding of this experience will depend on my understanding of the phenomena of culture and religion, and their interrelationship, and the theological reflection that this analysis provokes. I shall now share with you briefly some of these elements.

Culture and Religion: Anthropological Perspectives

Culture is the way people live. It is the way people understand themselves, organise themselves and celebrate life. They understand themselves in the context of the world in which they live. Their self-understanding results in a world view which finds expression in myths and symbols, especially stories of their origin and end, and images of their ongoing life. Their self understanding finds a different kind of

expression in the way their community is structured socio-politically, with differentiation of roles, kinship and other rules that govern mutual interaction, economic relationships that condition patterns of behaviour, and rites of passage that guide the process of socialisation. Communal celebrations of life are the occasions when such self-understanding is actualised, invested with emotional power and given value. Culture is the way in which a community humanises itself and the world in which it lives. Subject to the conditioning of economics, geography and history, the symbols, structures and patterns of behaviour through which such humanisation takes place are the creations of the community. This is the root of cultural pluralism. But once created they acquire a certain objectivity and autonomy, and structure the way succeeding generations of people live, though organic creativity and consequent social change remain possible. The process of creation-socialisation is not a static one, but an ongoing dialectical one[1]

Religion is the deepest element in culture. Basically it is both a meaning and a prophetic function, answering the question 'why ?' in terms of origins and goals of life and structuring relationships and behaviour with reference to this answer. It is the deepest because it operates at the levels of the ultimate. Religion is at the root of culture, animating it, while being structured by it. While its role of animation makes it a prophetic element in the life of the community, it is always in danger of being domesticated by the day-to-day business of living. But the prophetic element always bounces back in the form of holy people and radical movements for renewal.

In its relation to culture various levels in religion could be distinguished. At a cosmic level, religion is simply the counter-part of culture. This is the level of tribal and popular religion. Even at this level it plays a double role. On the one hand it supports and justifies the current worldview and the structures based on it. On the other hand it keeps challenging, in the name of this norm, any serious deviations that may emerge in the course of ordinary day-to-day living. Religion can do this because, through its points of reference in the origin and the end of the community, it acquires, as I have indicated, an ultimate character, beyond the vicissitudes of its current cultural manifestation. The myths and the rituals are the carriers of this function. The great religions acquire a further 'metacosmic' dimension, attributed to a special revelation or illumination. Ultimate reality is perceived

1 I have borrowed rather eclectically concepts from cultural anthropology. I owe a particular debt to Clifford GEERTZ, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York, 1973, Victor TURNER *The Ritual Process*, Chicago, 1969; Peter L. BERGER and Thomas LUCKMANN, *The Social Construction of Reality*, New York, 1966.

as transcendent and becomes Absolute, in relation to the world and cultures which are seen to be relative. Of course religions cannot remain metacosmic if they have to play their proper role with regard to culture. So they keep a cosmic dimension by integrating in themselves elements from popular religion, giving them a new meaning. These elements may belong to the culture from which they have emerged or to the culture into which they are inculturated. People who belong nominally to a metacosmic religion, may continue to remain at a cosmic level. Even the absolutes of a 'metacosmic' religion can express themselves only in the symbols and language of a particular culture. It is not my intention here to go into the philosophical implications of the symbolic nature of religious language. But we have to hold on to this Absolute-in-the-relative character of the religious symbol for any meaningful talk on religion, culture and dialogue. One is often tempted to move from an experience of the Absolute to absolutizing the experience.

It is with the great religions that we discover fully the relationship and the differences between religion and culture. They are like the soul and the body. There is a level in which religion points beyond man and the world and demands the commitment of faith. But it becomes relevant to life only in so far as it is incarnated in a culture. A given religion can find self-expression in many cultures. Many religions can express themselves in terms of a single culture. From the encounter between religion and culture are born a worldview that provides a background, a system of values that guides choices, an ethos that sets the emotional tone, and an ideology that orients action.[4]

Comparative studies of religions and cultures have shown that underlying a plurality of cultural and religious expressions are certain constants both of pattern and content. One may explain these in various ways, ranging from the common structure and functioning of the human brain to a common cosmic revelation, through common human needs, similarity of human experiences and situations, and a common human nature. Whatever the reason, a certain community is a fact of experience and is the basis for dialogue, even if this community is not identity, but dynamic or structural equivalence.

A poor man, busy earning his living, may have no time for religion, except at a very pragmatic level of a few rituals that meet certain basic psychological and social needs. A fanatic absolutizes either his experience of the Absolute or the culture in which

4 I have borrowed the terms 'cosmic' and 'metacosmic' from Aloysius Pieris, "Mission of the Local Church on Relation to other Major Religious Traditions: The Non-Semitic Religions of Asia", in Mary Motte and Joseph R. Lang (eds.), *Mission in Dialogue* (New York, 1982), 426-441. Other similar pairs are: transcendental/pragmatic (Mandelbaum), eschatological/ethical.

it finds expression (sometimes mixing ethnic elements with it). A secular outlook prescinds from religion. The focus is on ideology, even if around it one has to build up a worldview, an ethos and a value system. If religion is perceived as a threat, then the ideology will be anti-religious. If religion is seen as non-threatening, it is ignored and/or tolerated and privatized. For the fervent, religion may become an acosmic pursuit of the Absolute that alienates them from the real world and its problems. There will finally be some for whom religion is really meaningful and relevant to their daily living in community in view of a fuller life. Dialogue will be different in these different situations.

The Indian Situation

To guard against abstract reflection, let me again turn my mind briefly to the situation in India today. India is a poor country. What little wealth it has is concentrated in the hands of a few and more than 60% are below the poverty line. The social structures remain largely feudal, further strengthened by the pervading caste system. Politically it is broadly committed to socialism, democracy and secularism (that is, non-identification with any one religion). While the cosmic aspects of religion tend to sustain the existing order of things, the metacosmic aspects tend to lead to various types of acosmisms. There is an openness to the divine, a sense of the unity of all beings, a desire for liberation and fulfilment, a wholistic perspective, a spirit of tolerance, and a feeling of submission to a world order. Within an overall unity there is a rich diversity of languages, ethnic groups, sub-cultures, traditions and religions. With rigid structuring at the social level, there has been a tolerance and openness to mutual influences at the level of the mind and the spirit. While European culture and science and technology have had a powerful impact, no particular ideology seems to have taken root in the country. It is at the cross-roads between the East and the West. At the moment economic, social, regional and religious tensions are mounting. These tensions could be an opportunity for growth; they could also lead to disaster.

My Christian Responsibility

What is my task as a Christian in this situation? I do not have a ready-made plan of action or solution. I am committed to building up a better humanity as the realization of the Kingdom. I have some indications from the Gospels of the general characteristics of this Kingdom, like freedom, fellowship and justice. I feel in me the power of hope and love in the Spirit of Jesus. I do not have any examples to show where such a new community in Christ has become a reality. I

do not wish to build up a ghetto Church that would be an ideal incarnation of the Gospel in Indian culture, even if I can manage it. The only course open to me is to get involved in the community as it is and to make my specific contribution to building it up. I start with the realization that we — the community — share a common responsibility and a common culture. I also accept that this culture is being animated by different religions. Can the religions engage jointly in this work of animation ?

As believers we are committed to different Absolutes. At this level — the metacosmic — I come together with my fellow believers to celebrate my faith. I try to do this in the symbols of my culture, with reference to my life-situation I dialogue with my fellow citizens of other religions in order to promote mutual understanding and harmony. We can also dialogue at the level of spiritual experience towards mutual enrichment from each one's spiritual heritage. Finally we can also work together to promote common human values of freedom, fellowship and justice[5] My key question is whether this collaboration is merely at the secular level, as it will have to be if I am working together with others who are following a secular ideology, or whether our religions enter into and animate together this collaboration at the secular level. Are we working together at the secular level, each one inspired by his or her religion, or do we receive some common inspiration from our religions through our religious dialogue ? Do our secular collaboration and religious dialogue remian at two different levels, perhaps even with different groups of people, or are they integrated ? My question is not an idle one. I know groups of religious people who meet to share their religious experiences or problems and who remain only at that level, even if some of them do have other social commitments I also know people belonging to different religions working together for the promotion of justice and freedom at the socio-economic-political level, bracketing or privatizing their religious belief, when they do not claim to be atheistic. It is my contention that true inculturation demands that this dichotomy between secular and religious levels is broken down and that interreligious dialogue becomes an integral part of collaboration even in the secular sphere. I would even say that such integration is the real test of authentic, non-alienating dialogue among religions, as of authentic inculturation in a multi-religious community.

5. The Federation of Asian Bishop's Conference (RC), at their first meeting in Manila in 1970, resolved. "We pledge ourselves to an open, sincere, and continuing dialogue with our brothers of other great religions of Asia, that we may learn from one another how to enrich ourselves spiritually and how to work more effectively together on our common task of total human development."

A Convergent Movement

What do I mean by common animation? I do not certainly mean the kind of agreement on common policies and programmes entered into by political parties in a coalition. What I have in mind is that each person rooted in his religious commitment converges through dialogue toward a common worldview, system of values, ethos and ideology. A pluralism of approaches, based on different faith commitments is accepted and therefore there is no search for identity. But there is mutual openness and learning so that the convergence also includes complementarity. Total unity is required only in action programmes. But at the level of values, ethos and ideology a real convergent pluralism, born not of convenience but of mutual respect and dialogue, can be pursued. Such dialogue will have to be structured around a common commitment to community building (without which it will be just academic), in terms of common reflection and discussion, listening to the Scriptures, exploring each other's tradition, prayer and celebration. Common symbols will have to be elaborated. I am not speaking here of one community participating in another's religious activity. I am speaking of common religious activities, created to express the fellowship one has achieved through dialogue. I do not of course exclude participation, under certain conditions, in each other's religious activity.

Two examples, quickly sketched, may clarify what I have in mind. Let us say that Christians and Hindus are committed to the promotion of human dignity. The Christians see man as created in God's image, redeemed by Christ and called to share God's own life in fellowship with other men. The Hindus see in man a divine being growing towards liberation and fulness in fellowship with all beings. Both speak of a certain divinity in man of the need for liberation, of a growth towards fulness of fellowship. The Christians speak of man's domination over nature; the Hindus stress his harmony with it. The Christians, though they give importance to history as the field for human growth, easily dichotomise spirit and matter. The Hindu tends to be acosmic but has developed the wholistic perspective of Yoga. The Christians prize man's creative initiative. The Hindus set man's creativity in the context of the universal law of dharma. If the two traditions dialogue together they can build up a powerful image of the human person to inspire their common pursuit to defend and promote his dignity and well being.

My second example is a person who had some success in authentic inculturation and dialogue. He is Mahatma Gandhi. He believed that a religious person in pursuit of Truth has to be involved in politics

and social reform. He developed the ideology of *Satyāgraha* (the seeking of Truth or Reality) through *ahimsā* (active non-violence). The Gītā called him to fight for *dharma* (Righteousness). Christ suggested the way of suffering love. He did not lose his roots. But he was open to the world in a practical way. He promoted prayer meetings in which Scriptures from different religions were read, hymns sung, and prayers said. He gave his own life in the cause promoting peace between Hindus and Muslims.[6]

Some Clarifications

It is time now for some clarifications of a theological nature that will throw further light on what I have been trying to say. Some of these are commonly accepted today. Others may need longer development than I have time for here

For me evangelization is the spreading of the Kingdom of God, which is being built up by people in history, in spite of all the conflicts, hatred and death It is really the promotion of culture in the full sense of the term. It is the mysterious work of the Spirit leading the world to its fulfilment We are the servants of this Kingdom.

The Kingdom is not simply co-extensive with the Church but transcends it The Church is at the service of the Kingdom. It is called to discipleship and witness, not to promote itself but the Kingdom. The Spirit may call people to join the fellowship of the disciples of Christ But the Church itself is for the whole world, called to be leaven It is also wise not to identify the Church with any single cultural expression of it. Continuing interpretation is required to distinguish the Word from, but in, its historical concretizations

Whatever be our understanding of the unique mediatorship of Christ and of the role of the Church in the plan of God — I am not denying them, further reflection is needed in the light of experience — religious pluralism is a fact of experience, a sign of the time brought to our attention by the encounter of Christianity with the great religions in the post-colonial period. Religions have a role in God's plan for humankind according to his universal salvific will This positive assessment will also apply to their Scriptures, symbols, etc. This is not to say that they are free from human imperfection which will have to be discerned Dialogue therefore is really meaningful. If God has revealed himself in some way to my brothers of other religions, then that revelation is significant not only to them but also to me.

6 I have worked out the complementarity of the Hindu and Christian traditions with reference to the Indian situation in "Towards a Culture of Wholeness", VIDYAJYOTI 47, (1983), 67-76.

We have to develop an integral approach not only in considering God's self-revelation, but also the response of the human community. In multi-religious situations we have to think of basic *human* communities rather than of basic Christian communities. The Christians will find themselves together around the Eucharistic table on the Lord's day. At other times their life will be structured by the other human communities to which they belong. It is in the midst of the human community that the Eucharistic community becomes meaningful. It is in building up the world that the Church is being built up It may be helpful to formalise proclamation, dialogue and liberation for clearer understanding But they are mutually involved in each other as integral elements of evangelization.

The convergent movement I was talking about will be carried by symbols which are capable of a certain polyvalence around a central core and whose concrete connotations are controlled by the content of usage This is what makes possible, not only common reading of Scriptures, common prayer, common celebrations etc, but also the use of other religio-cultural symbols in the self expression of the Word At the level of symbols a 'both and' perspective, in the Oriental fashion, is more valid than 'all nothing' or 'yes,no'.

Conclusion: A Community, Open and Committed

There are no blue-prints for a dialogue in the context of inculturation Praxis must precede theory While creative and discerning leadership is necessary both inculturation and dialogue must become the activity of the people Fanaticism in religion is triggered by fear. fear of what is perceived as evil, fear of proselytism and domination, and fear of the forces of disintegration not strictly religious, but against which religion seems to be the only cementing force that can command unquestioning loyalty from the people Focusing on the promotion of a basic integral humanism, in the pursuit of which people of all religions will commit themselves together, engaging also their religious fervour in the process, seems the only authentic way of promoting a fellowship among people of different religions Unless we keep moving beyond a spirit of tolerance to one of collaboration in a common project there will always be the danger of sliding back into fanatical attitudes

The spirit of collaboration demands an open community, with a clear centre but with open frontiers Christianity in India appears rigidly structured around strong authority figures, defensive and triumphalistic at the same time The prophetic religions in general seem more aggressive than the mystic ones They not only witness,

but condemn. They have not really come to terms with pluralism within and without. They tend to dismiss quickly the openness of South and East Asia as syncretistic. Yet the Asians seem to know how to combine commitment with openness and how to handle pluralism positively and creatively. Here is certainly something that we Christians can learn from Asia, as a result of our inculturation there.

The Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians started off with poverty as the reality of the third world. As they moved into Africa, they discovered the importance of culture. Asia made them aware of the religious dimension. These are the three challenges facing us today. I hope I have shown you one possible way of meeting this triple challenge in an integral manner so that, in the power of the Spirit, we can make all things new.

Continued from p 52

quite a difficult problem and no ready solution is really available

By and large the book provides a wealth of facts and much food for ecumenical thinking I am less impressed by the kind of mentality that inspires more than one statement one occasionally perceives a sort of one-sided attitude towards the papacy and the See of Peter Nobody can deny that both have had, have, and will have their limitations All the same, they also have some positive aspects These are hardly ever mentioned. In such a useful book it is regrettable that there is no index of names and places.

E R HAMBYE, S J

Martin Luther. Sa Foi, Sa Réforme Étude de Théologie Historique By YVES CONGAR O P *Paris, Les Éditions du Cerf*, 1983. (Cogitatio Fidei) Pp 150 Ff 49 50

Father Congar has been and still is one of the foremost contemporary theologians of ecumenism It was to be expected that on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of Luther's birthday he would come out with an evaluation of the reformer As he himself confesses, he became interested in Luther and Reformation already in 1925, and more particularly since 1931 In 1950 he published an important study on the Protestant Reformation entitled *True and false reform of the Church* Regrettably it has not been translated into English so far.

The chief study of Congar's new book is found in pp 18-81 under the title "Criticism of Scholastic Theology. A New Theology", which has a concluding note on the reformatory character of the general council of Lateran in 1512-17. This study is very relevant because that general council just preceded Luther's first moves towards a reform, still Catholic at that time It was partly the failure of that Lateran council to bring about a real reform of the Church that made Luther cynical about the efficacy of conciliar reforms Two other studies found in the same book deal successively with the Eucharist and its theology in Luther, and with his Christology It should not be forgotten that Christology and Eucharist are intimately bound together

Reading these well-articulated pages, well-grounded on textual evidence, and well-focussed on fundamental issues, I am strengthened in a conviction I have had for years Luther was a totally sincere person, but his theological approach was one-sided because he depended excessively on St Augustine and the Agustinianism of the late middle ages Ecumenism does not mean being gullible, or being open and kind at the cost of truth Not all of Luther's ideas are acceptable Sifting them with an honest criticism is of primary importance. For this work we owe a debt of gratitude to Fr Congar's intelligence and fairness.

E. R HAMBYE, S J

See also p. 28

Towards an Inculturation in the Non-Sanskritic Tradition

LANCY LOBO, S.J.*

Introduction

UNDER the umbrella concept of inculturation, a set of ideas like accommodation, adaptation, integration, indigenisation, Indianisation, regionalisation and contextualisation, have been expressed and discussed in the cultural life of the church in India. Understandably, the areas that are more affected by inculturation are liturgy and the formation of the religious personnel. In the latter, among many other elements, the quantum of Indian religous thought has been increasing ever since the inculturation debate began, especially in the areas of philosophy and theology. The excessive conceptual stress on philosophy and theology in the formation of the religious personnel has perhaps been countered to some extent by the "liberation theology" thrust, which through its "social analysis" focuses on the existential concerns of the lower strata of Indian society. Not many perhaps, will deny that "liberation theology" is also a necessary limb of inculturation process, specially if the indological concerns tend to be at a more conceptual level.

The following discussion makes an effort to look appreciatively and critically at the two aspects, viz., indological and liberative, in the inculturation debate through the use of a dichotomous model as applied to Indian civilisation. The dichotomous, viz sanskritic and non-sanskritic, model helps us to clarify some conceptual aspects of inculturation and at the same time to propose a brief programme for a total inculturation in a group. Thus the article hopes to bring out the significance of inculturation in the non-sanskritic tradition for the formation of the religious personnel in India.

The Dichotomous Model

Social anthropologists like Robert Redfield and in our own country M. N. Srinivas have been pioneers in using this dichotomous

*Fr Lobo is a member of the Jesuit province of Gujarat and at present a doctoral student of Social Anthropology in the University of Delhi.

model for analysing a civilization. For Redfield, civilization is a compound culture, composed of two traditions viz., the "great tradition" and the "little tradition". He explicitates:

> In a civilization there is a great tradition of the reflective few, and there is a little tradition of the largely unreflective many. The great tradition is cultivated in schools or temples; the little tradition works itself out and keeps itself going in the lives of the unlettered in their village communities. The tradition of the philosopher, theologian and the literary man is a tradition consciously cultivated and handed down; that of the little people is for the most part taken for granted and not submitted to much scrutiny or considered refinement and improvement.[1]

These two traditions may be named by similar pairs of phrases like high culture and low culture; classical culture and folk culture; hierarchical culture and lay culture; learned traditions and popular traditions and so on. Srinivas who initially viewed Indian civilisation with the dichotomous categories of Brahminic and non-Brahminic culture, later on preferred the expressions sanskritic and non sanskritic[2] Indian civilisation is basically Hindu civilisation and Sanskrit has played an important role in its liturgy and Scripture, its literature and philosophy. Rituals and practices enshrined in sanskritic manuals form the core of the sanskritic tradition The whole gamut of local practices which do not find their basis in Sanskrit manuals form the non-sanskritic tradition. Even the deities of Hinduism can be looked at from the sanskritic and non-sanskritic categories. "Those deities whose attributes and modes of worship are described in mythological, liturgical and other texts may be called Sanskritic."[3] But other "deities have non-Sanskritic names and oral myths attached to them; they are represented by unhewn stones or crude images; the modes of worship are local and do not follow any liturgy; offerings include meat and liquor, and the priests, or shamans, as well as the devotees are generally drawn from the lower castes."[4]

Broadly the devotees of the sanskritic tradition are drawn from the higher caste Hindus while those of the non-sanskritic are drawn from the lower castes and lower classes of Hindu society. The former are generally literate, socio-economically better off, perhaps wield political power, cultivate their tradition in schools and temples and are relatively urbanised, tending towards Westernisation. The latter are generally illiterate or less literate, socio-economically poor, wield less

1. Robert REDFIELD, *The Little Community and Peasant Society and Culture*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1956, p 41
2. M. N. SRINIVAS, *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India*, Bombay, Asia Publishing House, 1952, p. 30.
3. M. N SRINIVAS and A M SHAH, "Hinduism", in David L. SILLS (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* New York, The Macmillan Company & Free Press, 1972 reprint, Vol. 6, p. 359.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 362.

political power, have no specific schools or temples to cultivate their tradition and tend to sanskritise themselves. What is significant at this juncture is to observe that the sanskritic tradition of Hinduism is subscribed by the Hindu elite, especially the upper castes, while the non-sanskritic tradition is subscribed by the vast masses belonging to the lower castes. The process of sanskritisation lies precisely in the imitation by lower castes of the sanskritic behaviour of upper castes, in view of upgrading their caste status.[5]

Although the great and little, or sanskritic and non-sanskritic, traditions can be theoretically isolated, they are in fact interdependent interlinked, and influencing each other. Many of the philosophies, theologies and scriptures arose from the little or non-sanskritic tradition. The Ramayan was derived from the oral tales and fashioned into a Sanskrit epic by a poet called Valmiki and thus became part of India's great tradition The ethics of the Old Testament arose out of tribal peoples and were re-shaped or processed by the reflective, literate philosophers and theologians of the times Having become part of great tradition these return to the little tradition in many modified ways. Thus the two traditions are like two strands that are intertwined to make the one rope of the heritage of a country.

Inculturation and the Sanskritic (Great) Tradition of India

Initially and even to a great extent today, the inculturation efforts of the church in India have been and are along the sanskritic lines. Indology is a discipline that studies largely the great or sanskritic tradition of India The number of notable indologists that the church has produced speaks loudly about its near total surrender to the sanskritic tradition The syllabuses of major training centres for Christian religious personnel, like seminaries, etc , have greatly reduced the quantum of Western philosophy and increased the quantum of Indian philosophical thought through the study of the Hindu scriptural texts The mushrooming of Christian "ashrams" in many parts of the country is a testimony to the church's love for the sanskritic tradition, and the Church's liturgy, too, has been influenced by elements of Hindu sanskritic tradition

The following reasons perhaps have been largely responsible for the church in India coming in contact with the sanskritic rather than the non-sanskritic tradition The first though not in any order of preference, is the "downward filtration theory" If you pour a bucket of water on the tip of a porous pyramid it gradually filters down to the

5 M N Srinivas *Social Change in Modern India*, Delhi, Orient Longmans, 1980, p 6

base. In other words if you change the few people occupying the top of a social pyramid, those below are bound to be eventually changed. Here, change may mean an interior transformation in values, attitudes, and behaviour, or simply a conversion in the traditional sense. In traditional India the power elite, religious elite and social elite were, by and large, of the sanskritic type, and it was supposed that studying the sanskritic tradition and exposing the Christian religious personnel to it, would greatly increase their ability to spread the Gospel in the whole society. Robert de Nobili's successful work among the upper castes, especially the Brahmins of Tamilnadu in the 17th century, had the assumptions of the downward filtration theory. If Brahmins were to accept Christianity, it was likely that the other castes lower than the Brahmins would do so with relative ease. The downward filtration theory has also been subscribed by the church in areas like education, where it has catered to the Indian elite through a multitude of educational institutions.

Second, since the latter half of the nineteenth century there has been a phenomenal growth of nationalist sentiments among the Hindus. Patriotism was expressed in Hindu idiom, sentiments and tradition Those who spearheaded the nationalstic and patriotic movements were by and large the Hindu elite belonging to the sanskritic tradition. An offshoot of such a thrust is still visible in the scores of rightist Hindu organisations in present-day India. For many reasons, some real and others fictitious, the church was identified as Western and colonial, and consequently as less nationalistic and less patriotic. In its eagerness to manifest its truly Indian character, the church leaned too easily towards the sanskritic tradition.

Third, the hierarchy and the religious personnel of the church belong greatly to the great tradition of Christianity No one would seriously dispute that, by and large, the religious personnel form in many ways the elite of the church, as opposed to the lay masses who belong to the little tradition. Perhaps the communication, dialogue and interaction between the two great traditions, Christian and Hindu, was easier than across the traditions. A Christian philosopher would somehow more easily interact with a Hindu philosopher than with a Hindu layman. Little wonder then, that our interreligious dialogue has basically remained at the sanskritic level. The elites of any civilisation or religion find certain similarities with one another.

Fourth, the theological methodology of the church has by and large followed the "downwards" rather than a "upwards" approach. The essentialist theology goes down from the universal to the particular ! This methodology has greatly influenced the church's process of

inculturation too. *Though the church in India has an excellent team of personnel working at grass-root levels with the folks of the little tradition, no substantial advances have been made in new ways of worship based on the popular religions.*

Fifth, the non-sanskritic or little tradition was seen as a mess of jumbled up superstitions, beliefs and rituals of the low, uncouth, rural, illiterate, ignorant and backward masses of humanity. Consequently the popular folk, lay and village religion was considered somewhat inferior to the classical, scriptural, philosophical, more or less organised, religion of the elite. In the Christian civilisation the religion of the peasant was somewhat looked down upon as inferior, when compared to the religion taught in centres of learning like the Gregorian University! Similarly, in Hindu India there exists a wide gap between the peasants' religion and the religion taught in Kashi Vidyapith.

The consequence of the overemphasis on the sanskritic tradition by the Indian church has been that it has upheld implicitly that the tradition of the Hindu upper strata is the real Hinduism and it alone merits scholarly attention. Thus it has produced good many indologists with a good knowledge of Sanskrit, busy with textual or scriptural scholarship in the literary tradition. While continuing scholarship in this tradition is needed for a number of reasons, one must not forget the drawbacks of such exclusive scholarship undertaken for the sake of inculturation. Indological scholarship has by and large failed to give an understanding of Hindu religion *as it is lived out* today, either by the elites or the masses. Sanskritic scholarship has at the most given us a textual or library-view of pan-Indian Hinduism, by studying fossilized forms of the Hindu religion. On the other hand, there is a near complete absence of scholarship in the non-sanskritic tradition within the church. As we shall see, social anthropology is the right discipline for such a study.

The absence of research in the little tradition is ironic indeed, for the church's recruitment of religious personnel is by and large from this tradition, and those among the people that have responded to the gospel message have also been mostly people of the non-sanskritic tradition. It is not, in general the sanskritised Hindus that have responded to the gospel message in India but the non-sanskritised lower castes and tribes. The recruits for the religious personnel are mostly from the Christian little tradition, but in the course of their training which at times lasts as long as fifteen years, they are alienated. The nature of their training is such as to lead them either to ignore or look down on their own little tradition and to put on the great tradition of Christianity, or of Hinduism.

The recruitment of religious personnel takes place at a young age, too early a time to internalise the culture of even one's own group. Having been exposed to the great and sanskritic tradition during their formation the religious personnel are largely unable, in spite of their good will to grasp the cultural universe of the people they serve. As elsewhere, the classics, literature, philosophy, and theology in India are written by the upper castes who have very little feel for the socio-cultural universe of the lower strata. In their training the church personnel is exposed to commodities produced and sold by the upper castes or the sanskritic tradition. As part of the inculturation effort the religious trainees are asked to make serious efforts to gain a command over the regional languages. While this emphasis is laudable, much thought needs be given as to whose language the trainees are exposed to ? Is it the language of the sanskritic upper-strata or of the non-sanskritic lower strata ? While a certain amount of knowledge of the literacy language is necessary, continual exposure to literature written mostly by the upper-strata may not serve the cause of inculturation in the non-sanskritic tradition.

Groups that have Responded to the Church in India

In terms of historical background, geographical distribution, caste and class origin, life styles and culture, six broad groups may be found among the people who have responded to the church in India. First, the St. Thomas Christians of the Syro-Malabar and Syro-Malankara rites who constitute the oldest and the largest groups in India. Second, the Konkan Catholics of Bombay, Goa, and Mangalore, who have been the product of the Portuguese occupation Third, the Latin rite Catholics of South India consisting of three sub-groups: (i) low castes and fishermen converted in 16th century, (ii) high caste converts of the 17th century, consequent on the efforts of De Nobili; (iii) low caste converts who accepted Catholicism in the 19th century. Fourth, scattered groups in North India, like the Catholics of Bettiah in Bihar. Fifth, the Tribal Catholics of Central India converted from the second half of the 19th century onwards. And finally Catholics of tribal origin in the North Eastern states converted more recently.[6]

This broad classification may help to determine to some extent, first which groups derive from the Sanskritic and which from the non-sanskritic streams of Hindu civilisation, in terms of caste background. In terms of time perspective, too, the oldest groups are likely to have distanced themselves in some way from both the sanskritic and non-

6. Walter FERNANDES, "The Indian Catholic Community", in *Pro Mundi Vita Dossiers*, Asia-Australia Dossier, 1980, pp. 2-3.

sanskritic Hindu traditions and given birth to their own Christian great and little traditions. The converts of the sixteenth century possess a certain proximity to the Hindu sanskritic and non-sanskritic traditions, according to their caste backgroud. They have also evolved their own great and little tradition but perhaps possess greater incidence of sanskritic and non-sanskritic elements as compared to the oldest groups of Christians. Finally, the converts from nineteenth century onwards (inclusive the recent ones) are likely to have the greatest number of non-sanskritic elements, and, perhaps, they are still in the beginning stages of a process of forming their own traditions.

Liberation Theology and the Non-Sanskritic Tradition

It now becomes obvious, perhaps, that the religious personnel exposed basically to the sanskritic tradition of Hinduism and great tradition of Christianity is ill-equipped for dealing effectively with the people of the non-sanskritic tradition, either in developmental or in evangelisational matters. But a recent call within the church has given a certain amount of re-orientation to the church personnel: back to the masses, back to the villages, back to the lower strata of society, back to the oppressed, exploited and de-humanised humanity!

The church's massive undertaking in relief, social and developmental work on the one hand, and in conscientisation and activism on the other, has won some credibility to the oft-repeated slogan of the "Church of the poor and for the poor". Liberation theology has also indirectly helped the cause of inculturation in the non-sanskritic tradition of the little people. In some ways, it has given depth to the process of inculturation. From purely indological concerns the church has gone on to pay some systematic attention to the social and economic concerns of the lower strata at the grass-root level. Intellectual inputs in terms of social analysis, and greater exposure of the religious personnel to the economic problems of the lower strata, have indirectly furthered the cause of inculturation in India.

However, the contribution of the liberation theology thrust to inculturation is limited. By excessively leaning towards the classical Marxian orientation liberation theology cannot appreciate the width and depth of the inculturation debate. Culture itself is taken in a narrow sense. By focusing merely on poverty, exploitation, oppression and de-humanisation, a lot of other elements of the total culture of a group are overlooked. This is understandable: the main concern of liberation theology is not inculturation but liberation. But we must record that its contribution even to inculturation consists in turning the attention of the church to the lower strata, composed of

Christians and non-Christians. Moreover, of late an evolution in the thinking of liberation theologians has taken place. They have found their exclusive focus on the economic concerns of the lower strata wanting. They have seriously begun taking cognisance of the religious dimension. For instance, the efforts in the Basic Christian Communities to incorporate day-to-day life experiences in their liturgy and worship, in the local idiom, has been a welcome change.

Intertwining of Great and Little, Sanskritic and Non-Sanskritic Traditions

The dichotomous model is an analytical tool. It has been already remarked that the great and little, or sanskritic and non-sanskritic traditions are not mutually exclusive Every group or caste is bound to have within itself elements of both traditions, though in varying proportions. Between the religion of the sophisticated literate and that of the illiterate peasant, the possibility of common structural categories does exist.[7] Exclusive concentration on the part of the church on its own great tradition and the Hindu sanskritic tradition, and the near total absence of scholarship on its own little tradition and the Hindu non-sanskritic tradition, has not helped to discover the common structural categories of each religion. External inculturation is perhaps easy, viz , life style, habits, dress and so on. But for any meaningful and depth level inculturation, one must uncover the common structural categories An awareness of the complexity of the superimposition of one religious culture on another is greatly desirable. "Conversion" does involve the superimposition of the traditions of the new religion over the old one The osmosis that has taken place as a consequence needs sociological analysis The situation is complex as believers are often caught in a barrage of crossmessages. Culture, as we said earlier, is a design for living and the convert is continually faced with designs and traditions that conflict. Rarely, does a convert completely opt out of the old design and tradition to the new. He continually goes through the process of accommodating, adapting, and coping with the elements of these designs and traditions. Thus many missionaries find "unsavoury and superstitious elements" among their flock even after years of their being "practising Christians". Many of those who preached Christianity could hardly lay a serious claim to have understood the native design or tradition ! The label "natives are superstitious" becomes then a convenient way to explain the behaviour of the flock.

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7 Veena Das, *Structure and Cognition. Aspects of Hindu Caste and Ritual*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1977, p. 5.

Popular religion should be considered in the total cultural context of a group. The Hindu religion pervades every aspect of the behaviour of a believer at the non-sanskritic level. One cannot compartmentalise non-sanskritic religion without doing violence to it. Even magic, witchcraft and sorcery have structural significance. The distinction between magic and religion is at times ill-defined. Where does each begin ? What do popular religious practices, rites and beliefs mean to the members of a group ? What are their perceptions about them ? How are they changed by them ? Study must precede any attempt to purify popular religious practices. In its eagerness to purify the "superstitious" practices of the people the church's religious personnel has in some cases thrown the baby with the bath-water. Being alienated from the little non-sanskritic tradition, they often fail first of all to understand the cultural universe of their flock.

Time and again one hears such remarks in serious meetings of church personnel as, "The output is not proportionate to our inputs". This remark is heard both in developmental and evangelisational discussions The good will, sense of sacrifice and commitments of the church personnel is generally admitted and praised, even by non-Christians While one cannot always quantify output and inputs, the above remark has significance in the context of our discussion. Good will, sacrifice and commitment are not a substitute for scientifically exposing oneself to the total socio-cultural universe of the people one serves or works with A deeper study of little and non-sanskritic tradition may perhaps partly explain the problem of outputs and inputs

It is a rather common experience among the church personnel working with tribals or lower castes that the liturgy of the Mass does not make the faithful 'vibrate" as much as the *Ojha*, *Bhuta* or *Bhopa's* (sorcerer or spirit-medium) sessions No wonder they go to the "vibrating" sessions of the spirit-media after they have finished the holy Mass ! Not being able to understand the structural elements in the people's orientation to the spirit-medium, the church personnel will say, "People are superstitious, they need time to grow out of their beliefs !"

The religion of the little tradition of the lower social strata cannot be understood by arming oneself with more and more of the great or sanskritic tradition. One needs to be inculturated in the non-sanskritic tradition. In the following pages an attempt is made briefly to outline a method of inculturation in the little tradition The method is basically that of the social or cultural anthropologist. It is simply the incarnational method, pitching one's tent among the people for a sufficiently long period of time.

An Outline for Inculturation in the Non-Sanskritic Tradition

Social anthropologists in general, unlike the Indologists, feel as uncomfortable with the talk of "Indian culture" as with that of "pan-India Hinduism". Both terms pretend to encompass so much that they say very little. "Indian culture" and "pan-India Hinduism" are amorphous concepts that hide more than reveal the cultural and religious reality of India. The diversity of ethnic goups, religious beliefs, sects, philosophies, rites, and practices of the Hindus cannot be expressed by such labels. Any comment about Indian culture deserves the question whether the speaker is talking about South Indian or North Indian culture? If one speaks of South Indian culture, the hearer will seek specification whether the speaker is talking about Tamil, Telugu, Kannada or Malayalee culture? If it is Tamil culture, the hearer should ask if the talk is about Tamil Brahmin culture or of Tamil Harijan culture? In the Tamil Harijan culture one may ask if the speaker refers to the culture of the highest ranking Tamil Harijan caste group? And still further, if one is speaking of the culture of the elites among the highest ranking caste of Tamil Harijans?

There is no simple way of talking about the culture of broader regional or linguistic units in India One needs necessarily come down to the reasonably smaller social units of either caste, class or tribe or geographical units like village, taluka, district and folk region, and study there the total culture As a student of anthropology I feel that the best method to be truly inculturated in the little people is the one used by the anthropologists This method can very easily be adopted and adapted by religious personnel from the very beginning of their formation The outline I present here is based on my personal experience which I have found to be very useful[8]

The social anthropologist takes a small or manageable unit like a caste group, or a tribe and within that he selects a representative or "typical" village where he pitches his tent for over a year Culture is assumed to go through all its major temporal variations in one year Staying in a family provides a nearly perfect setting for one's own inculturation if one is an outsider, and re-inculturation if one is member of the same caste or tribe

The outsider becoming an insider is the key to the anthropologists' mode of studying an alien culture. The first few months are the toughest, when he is called upon to adapt, accommodate, learn and

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8 I have shared part of this experience in a lengthy article, "Becoming a Marginal Native", in *Navajivan, Stories of the Gujarat Jesuit Family*, no 11, March 1984, pp 1-30

internalise the local culture. During these early stages he feels like a fish out of water, as he is called upon to step out of his own cultural universe and go into the cultural universe of other people. He has to learn to survive physically, psychologically and morally in a, for him, strange cultural setting. He does not go there as an activist, a donor, a teacher or a development officer but as a learner, recipient and student. The people become his teachers. This process is similar to the "self-emptying" process which is mentioned in the Bible in the context of Jesus' incarnation. Emptying oneself of one's cultural or religious categories, moulds, parameters, criteria, values, and attitudes can also be compared to dying to one's self, to one's own culture, and being born anew in the culture of the people. No total inculturation can take place without the self-emptying process.

Culture is a design for living, inherited and transmitted by a group. Religion, though a part of this design, is all — pervasive, more obviously so in the non-sanskritic tradition. Since there are no texts available one has to rely on the socio-cultural context. The cultural design can be delineated from the context. Culture like an iceberg, operates four-fifths below the surface of a people's psyche. Only a first hand and prolonged exposure to the context can uncover the design. After the initial period of building rapport with the people and learning their external ways of behaviour, the anthropologist must accept that the community's own definition of its cultural world is a reasonable alternative to his own. During this restructuring of the cultural world the anthropologist goes through a lot of internal conflict between his own cultural world and the one he wants to inculturate himself in. This is perhaps the most important and crucial period in one's inculturation.

Participant observation is the main method which the anthropologist uses to obtain his data. He becomes as much as possible a member of the group and participates fully in the life of the community. Hence he participates in as many social functions, ritual celebrations, communitarian exercises, agricultural activities, panchayat meetings, formal and informal discussions, gossip, and so on, as possible. He is almost taken for granted. His presence does not upset anyone because he has been accepted as part of the group. At the earlier stages of his stay he is given a rosy picture of the community or the group. But as he becomes an insider he gets access to qualitative and secret category information that is not divulged to the outsider. People become natural and do not feel the need to rehearse their behaviour in his presence. We could say that the anthropologist is in a natural habitat and not in a laboratory.

Living with them for a sufficiently longer period of time helps him to cross-check again and again the data he secures or the hypotheses he wants to verify. Listening to people, understanding things as they understand them, eliciting their views, forms one of the basic exercises of the anthropologist. What he does will either tend to attract or repel information. He becomes the information absorber, the information analyser, the information synthesizer and the information interpreter. His internal mental state and inner resources help him in his work to reconstruct the reality of the people, be it social, religious, political or economic, and see their interlinkage and interdependence.

Thus the social anthropologist gets into the skin of people and attempts to see reality as they see it He knows where the shoe pinches because he has stepped into their shoes A stained-glass window can be looked at from outside and also from inside the church. From outside one can only see vague contours and lines. But from inside one can see the colour and beauty and the integral picture The inside-view of a group's socio-cultural universe can only be had by entering into the community

The social anthropologist arrives at a new reconstruction of reality not by distributing copious questionnaires, or by a quick and superficial interaction with the people, but by a prolonged stay of not less than a year This intensive study of a small unit done at depth helps him to generalise his observations beyond the unit he studies as the analysis of a drop of water from a lake helps to generalise about the water of the whole lake In the process, the social anthropologist goes through an internal transformation which may be called inculturation This transformation is experiential and not merely conceptual, life, not library based

Conclusion

The church in India has come a long way in its study and appreciation of "Indian" and "Hindu" culture From the impressionistic reportings of the early period of Abbé Dubois, it has come to produce serious scholars in Indology who have contributed much to the understanding of the great or sanskritic tradition of Hinduism. Perhaps a consciousness is growing in church circles that the scope of inculturation must be extended to the little or non-sanskritic tradition, and that this deserves a more systematic and scientific attention.

It is only after social anthropologists have studied sufficiently the total cultural universe of many castes and tribes by the method briefly outlined above, that depth to the debate on inculturation can be given.

Only then, perhaps, a meaningful interaction between Christian indologists and Christian social anthropologists will take place. In other words, a deepening of the inculturation process will occur if there is an interaction between the great and little traditions, the sanskritic and non-sanskritic poles of our culture. Theologising would perhaps become more realistic, relevant and reliable when both an inside-view of the little and non-sanskritic tradition and an analysis of the great and sanskritic tradition are available.

The method used by the social anthropologist of inserting himself in a group for studying its socio-cultural universe has potential significance for the inculturation of the religious personnel of the Church. The method is essentially incarnational, experiential and transformative. Not each religious can be a trained anthropologist. But good orientation in the method and a sufficiently prolonged exposure to a unit like a village, tribe, or caste, would do a lot more to promote the cause of self inculturation than all the library books on inculturation.

Time and again criticism is heard about the religious personnel, working either outside their own culture or within it, that they do not really belong to the "moral community" of the place. They have been sadly likened to outsiders or government officials. It is interesting to observe that some eminent social workers of Brahmin and Baniya castes of Gujarat have used the method of the anthropologist and become inculturated among the lower castes of the region. If the high castes feel the need to know and experience the cultural universe of the lower castes of the same region, how much more is this necessary to those that are complete outsiders to the place?

Lifestyle in the Eighties: An Evangelical Commitment to Simple Lifestyle. Edited by Ronald J. Sider. *Exeter: The Paternoster Press*, 1982. Pp. 256. £ 5.90 net.

The consumer society does not satisfy all those who share in its constant quest for more material satisfactions. There is a growing number of convinced Christians who believe that they have to leave [illegible] the world [illegible] its present trappings. Evangelical simplicity, if not austerity, is for them the need of the day. This book which contains 14 testimonies of such a quest is very revealing in this respect. The return to evangelical simplicity and even to poverty is not of course a mere individualist search. Actually it is almost always combined with a passion for social uplift and change, for sharing with the poor and downtrodden, for creating a better society and for bringing about structural improvement where needed.

Such movements often start with humble beginnings. Most of the book is filled with authentic stories of individuals and couples, dedicated people who passed over to a new, more Christian life style sometimes as a result of a *metanoia*. One of the testimonies comes from Vishal Mangalwadi and his wife Ruth, both evangelists in India. Another is from Colleen and Vinay Samuel who are working in a slum area just in the outskirts of Bangalore. All these witnesses of a new life-style breathe a thoroughly genuine atmosphere. They all aim at being evangelical in every sense, without falling into the trap of fundamentalism, I am happy to say.

Our Protestant brothers and sisters who describe their ideals and practice are impressive by their authenticity. In many ways they share an ecumenical vision already partly realised. May they be thanked for it.

F. R. HAMBYE, S.J.

Towards a Practical Indian Ecclesiology

Sr. Sara GRANT, R.S.C.J.

I have been encouraged by reading and reflecting on the contribution of Sevanand to VIDYAJYOTI (December 1983) and the responses to it, and also by the paper read by Jyoti Sahi to the *Asian Christian Art Association* at their second General Meeting held in Manila last March, to share some thoughts which have haunted me for a considerable time. Deeply interested as I am in the development of Indian theological reflection, and convinced too that we have in India ancient (and modern !) intuitions which could revolutionize our understanding of the mystery of Christ in relation to our contemporary situation, I am more and more persuaded that understanding is not enough: if we really listen to what the Spirit is saying to us through our socio-cultural context, the spontaneous initiatives of our friends of other spiritual traditions and the responses of our own hearts, we must, I think, take our courage in both hands and follow out in our actual ecclesial practice the insight so clearly expressed in the statement of the *Indian Theological Association* in its October 1983 meeting at Nagpur. "The life of the believing community is nourished and strengthened by its scriptures and living traditions. Their interpretation today has to be articulated through the constant reference not only to past traditions, but also to the twofold contemporary realities, viz., the Spirit manifesting itself through the events of the times and the riches of the living religious traditions" (*ITA Final Statement*, no. 29).[1]

Christian Initiation

My present questioning is chiefly concerned with the problem of Christian initiation. I have for many years been preoccupied with the paradoxical fact that for historical, sociological and psychological reasons, all connected, baptism is for many sincere devotees of Christ in India an almost insuperable obstacle to full membership of a Christian community, and this through no fault of their own, but rather through

1. See VIDYAJYOTI, February 1984, pp. 99ff. for the full text of this statement, and *Jeevadhara*, December 1983, pp. 348ff. for an account of the ITA meeting, by S. ARULSAMY.

the misguided if well-intentioned policies of our ancestors in the faith. The very word "baptism" suggests to most Hindus an intrinsic alienation from all that they rightly treasure in their own spiritual and cultural traditions, including very often effective membership of their own family and community. Humanly speaking it seems almost impossible to change this situation However, my experience of living for twelve years in an ecumenical community open to all comers serious in their spiritual quest has suggested to me a radically new approach to presenting the Gospel — or allowing the Lord to present himself — in the Indian context Time and again we have found that the experience of living in a mixed community, sharing household tasks and reflecting together on our understanding of life and what is happening in the world today has quite naturally led our guests — and most notably Hindus - to join in our worship, including the Eucharistic celebration This is not a mere superficial "being present": from the very beginning, in response to a request from a holy old pandit who counted our ashram as a second home, we have always put flowers on the thali on which the eucharistic elements are placed, not only to signify the eight directions in which the grace of the sacrifice radiates into our world but also to be given to those who have not teceived "the full Christian initiation" and yet desire to associate themselves with us in our offering of ourselves to God in union with the self-offering of Christ If there is a large group, we explain this if only one or two are involved we simply offer them the flower their experience of *prasad* and the general context are sufficient to make the gesture intelligible

For ten years we had no problem over this, and it was apparently perfectly acceptable to our friends However, a year or two ago the whole issue was reopened and taken a step further when a young Hindu couple who had lived with us for many months and really become a part of our lives suddenly came in to Mass one day and were duly offered a flower each at the time of communion That night at the satsang they shared with us their deep hurt "We were fully in it," they said, "and we were about to receive *the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ* chru *cut!* someone offered us a *flower!*" The contempt in the tone on the word "flower" and the expressive gesture accompanying the word "cut" spoke volumes No explanation about "full Christian initiation" cut any ice at all — their argument was simple: "There is one Mystery beyond all name and form which men call by many names In this place access to that Mystery is through Jesus Christ *And we belong to this community!*" Since then, we have over and over again experienced, though less strikingly, the powerful

attraction exerted by the Eucharistic presence of the Lord. Another extremely alive and well-educated young man, when asked what he understood was happening at Mass to which he too had invited himself, answered slowly: "Sitting in that circle one feels very strongly that Jesus represents God — that God is the Guru; it is like being in the temple, only much better than the temple." A young Sindhi woman who has had a hard and chequered life often comes here. Once she walked in the middle of communion and asked her neighbour: "What is that ?" pointing to the Blessed Sacrament. On being told that explanations would be given later and offered a flower she said: "Why can't I have *That* ? I had it once in Goa, and ever since I always want it again. Why do I go on wanting it ?" It is not only the well-born and educated who feel the pull. Our Wārkarī friends, who drop in on their way to and from Pandharpur, Alandi and Dehu Gaon, spontaneously come to the ārati at dawn, midday or evening and sit quietly at the back during the Eucharist, gladly accepting their flower and on occasion, bursting, invited or uninvited, into holy song. They share our meals and find it wholly natural to pray with us. So too a group of very simple devotees brought to visit us by a mutual friend swept forward like a flock of birds as soon as they entered the chapel and prostrated before the Presence.

The Question

My question is, since in many cases at least the historical, sociological and psychological blocks referred to above do not seem to exist in relation to the sharing of the Eucharist, with all its implications of sharing of life and table-fellowship, could we envisage a revised form of pedagogy to Christ in which participation in the Lord's Supper, the "showing forth of his death until he comes would be the initial stage of incorporation into the community of his followers, and baptism, probably combined with confirmation, would be reserved for a later stage, as the expression of a definitive initiation into the mystery of his life, death and resurrection, into newness of life in God and a commitment to live by his Spirit as a core member of the Christian community which we call the Church ? The Eucharist could then truly become an easily accessible sign, extremely intelligible to the men and women of our time, of the eschatological banquet at the end of the ages when all the nations of the earth will be transformed into one by the power of the all-pervading Spirit.

The death of the Lord was in fact an exceedingly public event: it was moreover the source, as the Fathers loved to say, of both Baptism and the Eucharist, and so of the Church, "formed from the side of

Christ sleeping on the cross".[2] If for an earlier age familiar with the Greco-Roman mystery religions as well as with Jewish practice Baptism naturally seemed the most obvious first step for those who wished to live by the Lord's teaching, need it be so for us, who live in an age which has — and not only in India — a serious psycho-social problem about baptism, whether infant or adult[3], and a spontaneous and deep-rooted hunger and appreciation for community and the symbolism of a shared meal? In India especially, this symbolism of a meal which unites people of all communities, castes and religious backgrounds is increasingly understood and valued, and it is certainly a desperately needed sacramental sign - in the strict sense of effecting what it signifies — of the healing of this sadly divided nation and of humanity as a whole. Again, if in ancient times of persecution it was felt both prudent and necessary to introduce the "discipline of the secret" it does not follow that we in our very different situation should keep to the same principle.

This may appear a rather shocking suggestion to some, yet even in the Acts of the Apostles we find that the Holy Spirit did things that took the early Church by surprise one thinks of Peter on his roof-top at noon, and the Spirit falling on the unbaptised[4] It may be argued that this did not lead to any universal practice of confirmation before baptism, but I am not necessarily advocating any universal change: maybe we should simply read the New Testament with new eyes in the light of our own experience and ask ourselves if we have not, for example, tended to absolutise John 3 on the necessity of baptism in water and the Spirit if a man is to enter the kingdom of God, at the expense of John 6 to the effect that if one does not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood one cannot have life in him In fact of course the Church has absolutized neither, appearances to the contrary notwithstanding she has always known that "God is not bound by the sacraments", as the old adage has it, still less by traditional sacramental discipline, but may be she has not always been aware of the full extent of her own freedom.

Further Questions

There are of course further questions in this connection that call for prayerful reflection and a great sensitivity to the demands of the

2 St Bonaventure *De ligno vitae*, n 30

3 In other countries, at least in the West, the problems are chiefly concerned with infant baptism on various grounds, some alleging that it is often requested by parents for motives more social than religious, others that it lays upon the child obligations which are frequently repudiated in later life, and legitimately so, since no human being can commit another to the assent of faith, which is an essentially free act.

4 Acts 10, especially vv 44ff Fr Francis Pereira, S J, informs me that he considers that there is "a strong scriptural basis" for my proposal.

situation and the legitimate claims of tradition, and great openness to the further promptings of the Spirit. Some of these will certainly relate to the whole area of repentance, metanoia or "conversion", the sacrament of reconciliation — but reconciliation too is becoming such a felt need of our time that there should be no insuperable difficulty here.[5] An imaginative and realistic penitential rite at the beginning of the Eucharistic celebration would certainly be indicated, and in this connection the churches would probably need to think again on the subject of general absolution, which unfortunately appears to have been side-tracked at present.

... and Advantages

Another advantage of this approach would be that it would go far to restore to the starved Christian people the sense of the mystery and majesty of God and its stark demands on us, and also a realization of the depth of mystical experience to which every man, woman or child is called by the mere fact of being born a human being.[6] The "ticket to heaven" attitude to baptism and the cheerful socialization that has taken over in so many of our churches throughout the world in the name of liturgical renewal has only too often robbed us of our birthright in the Spirit, the "one thing necessary" of the Gospel Our ancestors in the faith were well aware that "at the end of all our knowledge we know God as something unknown, we are united with him as with something *wholly* unknown",[7] "a bright ray of darkness", "dwelling in unaccessible light". (1 Tim 6·16). Here on earth we surely need the joy of community celebration and from time to time even "shouts of joy". (cf. Ps 41:4), like the Israelites of old, to lead us into the house of God and the threshold of the inner sanctuary. An yet experience shows that the Eucharist celebrated with dignity, peace and friendship in an open community sharing the normal life-style of the people has an extraoridinarily compelling power to lead to the *paramapuruṣārtha*, the supreme goal of human existence in whom all human expressions of togetherness are not destroyed, but transcended: "there is but one Mystery beyond all name and form, and in this place *access to that Mystery is through Jesus Christ*". If the Eucharistic sacrifice is the "showing forth of the death of the Lord until he comes" (1 Cor 11: 26) and baptism is a plunging into the mystery of that death in order

5. The striking coincidence in our time of a widespread diminishing of the sense of sin, at least in its traditional form, and the progressive awakening to awareness of a sense of responsibility for one's fellow-men would repay theological investigation, especially with reference to the theme of this paper.
6. If any one has doubts about this let him/her read Paul and John.
7. St Thomas AQUINAS, commenting on Denis the Areopagite.
8. DENIS the AREOPAGITE.

to be reborn and totally committed to living by it, does logic inexorably demand that the plunging into the Mystery should precede encounter with it as a magnetic power at the heart of a welcoming community under the immediately intelligible sign of food ? Or, to put it differently, which approach more faithfully reflects the extreme accessibility implied in the repeated invitation of the Lord to all who are hungry, who thirst, who want to follow him, invitations explicitly given not exclusively or even primarily to the great and good, but to the weak, the sinful, the outcastes of human society, all those who know their need of God ? Maybe, like the disciples of old, we need to allow the Lord more direct access to the people and the people to him. We say of course that they meet him in us, we are his visible presence, his witnesses, and this is or should be true (though it is really surprising how complacently we can go on saying this, as though it happened automatically) As an old and wise sister commented apropos of the incident of the young Hindu couple and communion desribed above, "I thought of our Lord's words 'No one can come to me unless the Father draws him '(Jo 6 6) How *powerfully* they are being drawn by the Father !" The Father still draws, sometimes in disconcerting ways Perhaps we need to ask ourselves, will we — *can* we — allow them to come ? And if not, by what authority do we bar the way ?

Corroboration from an Independent Source

To my considerable encouragement, Jyoti Sāhi in the paper mentioned above[9] arrives at the same question by the very different though not unrelated road of a comparative reflection on church and temple architecture He points out that the worshipper entering a Gothic cathedral does so from the west, and the first thing he encounters is the *font* He has an impression of straight lines leading him inexorably *forward* out of the dark towards the altar, which is ablaze with light (from the magnificent east window immediately behind it). The experience of entering a Hindu temple is quite different Light, rejoicing, festivity, are all outside the temple *within there is a spiralling movement* into the heart of the holy of holies, the dark and cave-like *garbha-gṛha* or 'womb-house' *where a man* enters so deeply into the mystery of his Origin that in a very true sense be "comes not back again, yea he comes not back again"[10]

9 Not yet published, so far as I know

10 *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* VIII 15 1, literally referring to the absence of rebirth for the realised person, but analogically applicable to the irrevocability of genuine spiritual awakening

Jyoti Sahi goes on:

> If one could translate this visceral experience of the temple into spiritual terms, we would say that there is a movement from community, sharing, celebration, towards inner mystical experience, where the individual comes face to face with the Lord in the cave of the heart Would this not also indicate a movement from communion to baptism, from the shared meal to the secret experience of oneness with the Lord ? For Gandhi baptism could only come at the end of a spiritual search, it could not be the entry-point for community

Conclusion

It would seem that if the approach outlined here were not universally enforced, which would certainly lead to disaster, but adopted as something permitted in situations which seemed to demand it, a revitalization of the church might well follow, not only in India but in other countries as well. True, the number of the baptized might be smaller, at least for a time, but they would be deeply committed to the Lord and the kingdom of God, and it is probable that the number of those exposed to his presence and action in the Eucharistic celebration as liberating Word and Bread of life would considerably increase. The ecumenical question too would be catapulted into a new and please God salvific urgency inter-communion between baptized Christians would be put into fresh focus, and some of our present problems concerning it might shrink into truer proportion Take, for example, the two competing ways of seeing the sharing of the Eucharist, as either the cause of unity of faith or its fruit. The Holy Father declared his personal preference for the second during his recent visit to Switzerland Twelve years of ecumenical living have made me a staunch adherent of the first. It seems to me that we tend to give too much importance to exact understanding of what the Lord said or intended, and far too little to the sincere desire to accept *whatever* he intended and do as he meant us to do. Could we not continue our fraternal dialogue about his precise meaning, if we feel this is necessary, in trust and peace around the Eucharistic table, much as the disciples did on wider questions after the Last Supper, according to New Testament tradition ? (How much eucharistic theology did the disciples understand at that last meal ?) May be these are revolutionary thoughts, but if we honestly apply the words of Jesus about trees being judged by their fruits to our present policies, perhaps the conclusion will be that we could do with a little revolution.

Anyway, if by the end of the ages the Church is to be co-terminous with the human race in so far as the human race is permeated by the Holy Spirit, the walls and barriers have to start coming down some considerable time before that unknown date. It would be a great pity if the "official" Church were the last to get the message.

Note

The Dialogue between Islam and Christianity

W. Montgomery Watt's Contribution[1]

Not a few essays and books these days deal with Muslim-Christian relations, and a number of institutes in various parts of the world specialise in this field of study. Yet when an expert in Islamic studies of the stature of W. Montgomery Watt, engaged for more than forty years in teaching, research, writing and editing, finally publishes a monograph on Islam and Christianity today, this is an event of which thinking Christians and Muslims must take notice.

Professor Watt, an ordained minister in the Anglican Church, ever since his student years has maintained a keen interest in the larger philosophical and theological issues debated in contemporary society. Thus, besides his well-known monumental contribution to the study of the Qu'rān, the biography of Muhammad and the history of the formative period of Islamic religious thought and of Islamic culture in general, he has repeatedly addressed himself, as a committed Christian scholar, to urgent issues of his time, as for instance, in *Can Christians be Pacifists?* (1937), *The Reality of God* (1957), *Cure for Human Troubles* (1959) and *Truths in Religions* (1963).

Already in 1978 Professor Watt had published a quite comprehensive essay "Thoughts on Muslim Christian Dialogue" (in the first number of Volume I of the quarterly *Hamdard Islamicus*, Karachi). In it, he analyses the new, mounting challenge of Islam to Christianity and vice versa, as well as the challenge of the contemporary scientific outlook to both Christian and Islamic faiths. He defines dialogue as "the mutual exchange of views between people who have a genuine concern for one another and are open to learn from one another" (*ibid.* p. 5). In the process of dialogue, he sees three distinct phases at work, usually simultaneously: in the first, the members of each religion recognize the others as fellow-believers in God; in the second, a consequence of the first, a revision and reassessment by each religion of some of its doctrines occurs, to bring them in accord with the implications of the acceptance of the other religion as professing belief in God. The third phase is characterized by a renewal of vision.

This reviewer regrets that only some points of this important essay have found their way into the present book. The author's

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1. **Islam and Christianity Today. A Contribution to Dialogue.** By W. Montgomery WATT. Foreword by His Excellency Shaik Ahmed Zaki Yamani. *London, Boston, Melbourne and Henley, Routledge and Kegan Paul*, 1983. Pp. xiv-157. £ 8.95.

characterization of the Christian-Muslim relationship on the doctrinal level strikes one as incisive as well as balanced and realistic. The book differs from the earlier essay in that its overriding theme is the 'defence' of both Christianity and Islam against the challenge from 'scientism'. It also shows how in the effort of meeting this challenge the two religions, as it were naturally, enter a relationship of dialogue in solidarity, out of which emerges, at least at the doctrinal level, the awareness of the great affinity of both religions.

Professor Watt envisages dialogue thus enacted as "a process of mutual witnessing" where "neither party is abandoning anything of its essential truth (though it may be gaining a clearer idea of what is truly essential), but both are caught up into a friendly rivalry to discover which can show to the other the fullest and deepest truth" (p. 6). However, since such a doctrinal discussion is impracticable without "some philosophical basis", the author himself has made the attempt to create such a basis by bringing together ideas from different quarters and giving them some degree of coherence — ideas mostly from writers such as P. Teilhard de Chardin, John Macmurray, Michael Polanyi and Peter Berger This "philosophical basis" touches three areas: (1) verification of religious truth; (2) symbolic language in religion; and (3) a criticism of the assumptions of scientism.

Religions such as Islam and Christianity teach truths that differ, and even at times seem to contradict one another. How do we verify the truth of a religious teaching ? Professor Watt stresses the central importance of *action* In other words, the fruits certain teachings have borne in real life, become the criterion to establish their truth The gist of his argument is this· Over a period of centuries the great religions have enabled vast numbers of people to lead a satisfactory life They have verified, in general, that "the symbolic system of each religion, taken as a whole, presents a view of reality that is sound in many or most relevant respects" (p 22). Hence, the author concludes, most of the contradictions between different religious views of reality "are entirely or to a large extent only apparent" (ibid.).

The linguistic form of religious truth is largely symbolic language, "not fully descriptive but rather suggestive or evocative" (p. 30). One must therefore constantly keep in mind that Reality is more than symbolic pattern Hence, the corresponding attitude befitting the believer is one of "sophisticated naivety" — leaving anthropomorphic terms as they stand, yet knowing they apply to God in a different way.

A radical criticism of the assumptions of scientism obviously does not imply the refusal to accept genuinely its proven results. However, difficulties arise whenever the scientific account of reality claims authority outside its proper scientific context, or forgets that by virtue of its self-imposed methodological restrictions, it does not cover important aspects of reality, for instance, the human meaning of the reality in question Another mistaken assumption of scientism is that the detailed analysis of the parts of a whole leads to an adequate understanding of the whole.

On the basis of these clarifications, Professor Watt tries to demonstrate, in the main body of the work, the general agreement of the Islamic and the Christian doctrine on God: in His names and attributes; as revealing Himself through scriptures; as Creator and Sustainer of the universe, and, finally, as the Lord of history. In all these areas conceptions may vary but since all the terms applied to God in both traditions have the same evocative character, there is not much difference. Important differences between the two traditions emerge only in matters affecting the relationship between God and the human person. Many would locate the most consequential difference between Islamic and Christian doctrine in their respective teaching on transcendence and immanence. Professor Watt judges that even here the differences between Islam and Christianity, "apart form the doctrine of incarnation", are relatively slight (cf. p 52). But, one may ask, is it not precisely this doctrine which, once accepted, radically alters the believers' concept of God's immanence *and* transcendence ?

Before we move to a few general comments may we select here at random one or two single points for consideration ? Professor Watt defines the purpose of revelation thus "to give man a view of reality in respect of God's being and attributes and the mutual relation of God and man" (p 60). Such a rational understanding may just be sufficient to clear up the primitive misunderstanding of revelation as imparting scientific information, still widespread in fundamentalist circles of both faith communities. Yet this notional concept of revelation which pervades Professor Watt's argument, viewed in the light of the full meaning of revelation, is superficial and misleading. It abstracts from what would seem to constitute the essence of a Christian understanding of revelation namely the communication to the human person of the intimate being of God, and His free, personal relationship with His spiritual creatures. This relationship comes to its absolute climax when the divine self-communication takes the form of the hypostatic union in God's Incarnation in the created spiritual being of Jesus (cf. the article "Revelation" in Rahner/Vorgrimmler *Theological Dictionary*). We are not suggesting here that the full and distinctive Christian understanding of revelation could or should have been spelt out at every turn of the argument. But if it does come into view at all the Christian notion seems to be in danger of being emptied for the sake of harmony and conciliatory agreement.

What then, have Christians to say about the prophethood of Muhammad ? In his answer Professor Watt applies the principle, explained earlier, of verification of truth by action considering the many examples of saintly Muslim lives and the fact that it is Islam which nurtured them and in addition, enabled countless other people to live decent and happy lives even in difficult circumstances. Professor Watt is led "to the conclusion that the view of reality presented in the Qur'ān is true and from God, and that therefore Muhammad is a genuine prophet" (p 61). Even while accepting this conclusion, one may wonder whether this statement in all its simplicity is sufficiently precise. Would it not seem necessary to supplement it by spelling out what it is that constitutes a genuine prophet in Christian and Muslim

understanding ? If the term 'prophet' in its strict Christian theological meaning is applied to the 'Prophet of Islam', there arises at once the crucial and pertinent theological question of how the prophet of Islam — who lives centuries after Jesus Christ and who clearly seems to supersede his teaching and his definite claims as well as those of the community of faith referring to him — relates to the event of Jesus Christ as perceived in the faith of the Christians. This reviewer is not suggesting here that all these questions could and should have been dealt with in detail in this work However, an indication of the existence of a theological problem of this nature would be helpful and to the point.

Professor Watt is correct when he sees one of the greatest differences between Islam and Christianity in their respective teaching on law and its sources. He observes that it is the Islamic belief that all laws should be based on God's commands, while the Christians accept sound human reason as a source of law parallel to revelation. In the discussion of this point the author, endeavouring to bring the two communities closer to one another, appears to minimize unduly the actual difference between them on this point Jesus, he remarks, "criticized certain aspects of its [i e. the Mosaic law's] contemporary application, notably the attaching of great importance to ritual matters and the like, and the comparative neglect of some of the main ethico-legal conceptions He also taught that bad intentions were sinful, even if not followed by bad actions" (pp. 72f). Watt also suggests that purely historical factors caused Christian doctrine to accept sound human reason — as it had found expression in the ethics and law of Graeco-Roman culture, which surrounded and deeply influenced nascent Christianity — as a source of law parallel to revelation. This is a in contrast with the Islamic belief that all laws should be based exclusively on God's commands

This reviewer would have welcomed in this context a discussion of the deeper reasons for this difference They would seem to be related to the tenets of the mainstream and authoritative Christian teaching on human nature, sin and salvation To put it very shortly the difference does not seem to lie in the degree of *theo*-nomy, i e. of the God-relatedness or God-centredness of the law, but rather in the fact that the Christian teaching sees God as manifesting his binding will not primarily in scriptural propositions but rather in the person and teaching of Christ alive in the Spirit He is always "speaking" to the conscience of the human person in ever novel ways, through the historically conditioned community of faith as it enters an ever deeper understanding of itself and thus of the 'will of God', in the course of history Any progress in the understanding of this important cluster of problems would, furthermore, invite a dialogue on the role of freedom and of conscience, and on the relationship between the God-given law in general, moral law, and morality (or ethics).

Professor Watt's discussion of the belief in God's creativity in relation to a provisional philosophical cosmology based on evolution, would seem to be of secondary importance if he had spelt out the

principles of the proper hermeneutics of scriptures in Christianity and Islam. It can be shown that the relevant texts claim only the *fact* of creation, and that any theory of evolution presupposes something already existing and explains its changes in time. It is therefore difficult to see how — if evolution is really proven on the level of science — it could conflict with the faith message of the Scriptures.

We cannot enter into a discussion of other important points dealt with by the author as, for instance, the question of miracles, including that of Jesus' Virgin Birth and Resurrection, or the question of the interpretation of the scriptural statements on eschatology. The following few broader observations — have to suffice

Professor Watt singles out scientism as the major doctrinal challenge to both Islam and Christianity. However contemporary Christian - and, growingly Muslim -- religious thinking, is actually being developed in answer to the more radical challenge provided by the questionings of modern, post-Kantian philosophy with its ramifications in the philosophy of science, and in sociological and psychological theory The basic structure and approach of Rahner's *Foundations of Christian Faith* (German original 1976, English edition 1978), to take just one outstanding example, differs clearly from that of scholastic and neo-scholastic works Theology now unfolds as a metaphysical theological anthropology, which entails a constant awareness of the analogical (or symbolical) character of any metaphysical language, and starts from an analysis of the basic experience of transcendence, the 'content' of which is stipulated to be the mystery of God's self communication, Jesus Christ Or, as Rahner puts it when explaining what must be considered "to be the Innermost Christian understanding of existence" "Man is the event of a free, unmerited and forgiving and absolute self-communication of God" (*Foundations*, p 116) Such a theological approach because of its anthropological starting point it begins with the human person as the "Hearer of the Word" is open and dialogical in character.

The way in which Professor Watt has structured his discussion of the chief Islamic and Christian doctrines, or to put it differently, the frame he has chosen for his exposition, is basically that of the classical treatises of *kalām* (Muslim theology) and of the Christian scholastic tradition Thus the Christian doctrines and theological teachings have been forced into a framework which does not do justice to their unique emphases Hence the trend of minimizing the fundamental differences between the basic doctrines of the two religions, which characterises the whole work, has been accentuated

Perhaps it is significant that sin, freedom, salvation and redemption are hardly discussed in the work and consequently do not figure in the index either When speaking of humanity's creatureliness, Professor Watt states that Christianity and Islam agree about the human person being "capable of rejecting revealed messages and disobeying God's commands" (p 135), and that in doing so the human person is responsible for his actions, and so God would be acting justly in punishing him Watt sees a difference in the respective Islamic and Christian

teaching only in that, when both stress human disobedience's inability to thwart God's, "Islam would perhaps place more emphasis on God's continuing control of events" (*ibid*). Here we have a typical instance of Professor Watt's tendency to ignore doctrines quite central to either of the two religions and indispensable for a proper overall understanding of them. The theme of sin and of sin's pervasive, powerful effect on the destiny of humankind, for instance, are characteristic of the whole of biblical literature, from the first chapters of Genesis onwards, with high points in the books of the prophets (which include also the theme of redemption in the Songs of the Suffering Servant etc.) and culminating in the various writings of the New Testament. Yet, neither the biblical, i.e. the Jewish and the Christian, nor the (comparable but essentially different) Quranic 'morphology' of sin and redemption properly enter anywhere the main agenda of the work. The few pertinent remarks Watt offers at the end of his work, under the heading "Continuing the Dialogue" are disappointingly sketchy in nature. The fact that there is disagreement among Christians concerning the theological interpretation of terms like, for instance, saviour-salvation, redeemer-redemption, reconciler-reconciliation, cannot hide the central place that these terms have in the expression of the Christian faith experience and reflection, however inadequate the terms may be.

The author himself, realizing his bias towards harmonization of differing doctrines, states that, unintentionally, he has "tended to emphasize the similarities between the two religions" (p. 144). Our critical remarks should however not be misread as being designed to promote an approach to doctrinal Christian-Muslim dialogue where the points of difference would be highlighted to the extent of obscuring the area of substantial agreement Such an approach would go counter the spirit of the Declaration of Vatican II, *Nostra Aetate*. Yet we do think it essential to remember what the author himself states, early in the work, on dialogue as an ongoing process of mutual witnessing where none of the partners abandons anything of the essential truth of his faith (cf p. 6) Meeting in dialogical openness, in our view, leads not only towards a purification and pruning, but also simultaneously to a deepening in the awareness of the distinctive areas of one's respective faith experience, faith vision and, in consequence, of the doctrines held in one's faith In this context, we are somewhat sceptical about the concordist view of the future development of interreligious relationship which Professor Watt seems to envisage when he speaks of a kind of "amalgamation of religions" in the long run (cf p. 146)

Perhaps, the main significance of the present contribution of Professor Watt consists in the candid manner in which he, as a committed and sympathetic scholar of Islam, shares with his contemporaries the main areas and results of the "inner dialogue" he has been engaged in now for more than four decades. Our critical questions and comments will hopefully be taken as an attempt to respond to his challenge in his spirit.

Christian W. TROLL, S.J.

Forum

Riots in Delhi — Random Reflections

The assassination of Mrs Indira Gandhi and the fire ordeal that followed it in Delhi were so traumatic that even after a few weeks it is hard to recover from the shock and find adequate language to speak about the events. A particular community was branded and hundreds of its members were mercilessly slaughtered. Their shops, houses and factories were systematically and selectively looted and burned to ashes. Overnight thousands were rendered widows, orphans and homeless. Their selfhood and dignity were crushed in an orgy of hatred.

Siding with the Victims

One heard occasionally comments like, "They deserved it !", "It serves them right !", and so on. Even on the natural plane it is irrational to condemn a whole community for the crimes of a few senseless individuals. Perhaps this highlights a serious problem of the Indian society. The individuals are dissolved into the community, and get their identity only from it. Because of this the individual and the community are not differentiated. One or a few individuals' acts are seen as the action of the whole community, especially if they are criminal acts. Then the whole community is held responsible and forced to face the consequences of a manipulated violence of the masses, themselves brutalised and easy pray to controls owing to a life long existence in sub-human conditions. It is high time we begin to think about reorienting our social set-up so that the final values of humanism can flower, and our social consciousness so that individuals can belong to a community without losing their identity, and communities can thrive without becoming communalistic.

If we can distinguish the action of a few persons from that of their community, we shall not imput criminal responsibility on the whole community, as it happened in Delhi. Moreover, in the midst of a tragic situation it is irresponsible to ask whether people deserved or not to be punished. When the Samaritan saw the Jewish merchant robbed and wounded on the road side, he could have gone saying, "These Jews deserve it !" For the Jews were oppressing the Samaritans and treating them with contempt. But he became the *good* Samaritan by dying to his racial prejudice and seieng in the victim the brother in need of help. In so doing the Samaritan shiningly reflects the quality of the Father who sends his sun, rain and air to all, good and bad alike. If God would give his gifts only to those who deserved them, how many of us could lay a claim to them ?

Sin and Reconciliation

The events gave us a deeper insight into the reality of sin and reconciliation. While the recent Roman document on Liberation Theology insists that sin is primarily interior, "introducing disorder into the relationship between God and man," the tragic sights we saw revealed to us the power of its social and structural dimensions. We saw communities that were alienated, breathing murder and hatred, coming down on the helpless as a tidal wave of destruction and planned violence. Even many of those who did not actively participate in the bloody actions may have shared the responsibility simply by secretly condoning the atrocity or silently gloating over the plight of the victims.

We further discovered that as sin is both individual and communal, so also should forgiveness and reconciliation be. Sorrow for sin in the secret of our hearts is not enough. Experiencing forgiveness individually and interiorly is not adequate The effects of sin do not stop within the sinner Its effects have to be seen primarily from the perspective of the victim We cannot obtain our forgiveness simply in the isolation of a church or in the cool waters of a sacred river. God's reconciling presence is only in the wronged brothers and sisters. To hope to be forigven without any relation to them appears meaningless.

Still further, those who inflicted the miseries, and the Government that failed to prevent the vandalism, cannot wash their sins simply by distributing relief supplies and doling out money for rehabilitation. Reconciliation cannot be so easily and cheaply bought The sinner needs to humble himself before those sinned-against Without this, just giving material compensation preserves the sinner in his position of strength above the other, as one who gives, while the victim remains below as one who receives Unless this position is willingly and humbly reversed by the offender there is no possibility of true reconciliation wherein both become brothers again This point became clear to us when a widow refused to accept a Rs 25,000/-cheque from the Government in compensation for the death of her husband and son, and the destruction of her house To her, to receive money from the unconverted system was to humiliate herself further and to add insult to the dead. Such a situation is not yet ripe for true reconciliation.

The Presence of God

The question a believer had to ask is where God was during these painful events Christian faith tells us that the God who revealed himself from the burning bush spoke to us also from the burning heart of these battered people. The God who cried out from the cross in agony and anguish was now doing the same from these rejected and diminished persons. This is why it became imperative for us to rally behind the victims during the time of need. God was suffering in them. We were thrilled to experience how many people of all communities did hear this call of a suffering God: not only the many volunteers who in good will offered their services in camps and *mohallas*,

but even more so those, specially Hindus, who even in the thick of the disturbances protected their neighbours, perhaps at considerable personal risk. This action of grace was recognised by many of the victims and acted as a balm for the wounds they had received.

The presence of God in the victims became a deeper experience for us when we realised that it was He who gave them the reason and hope to live further. Deprived of the persons whom they loved, of the property on which they relied, of the places of worship which had nourished their faith, of the dignity and honour which sustained them, there was now no future to look towards, nor reason to live for. The paradox of seeing hope in hopelessness, light in darkness, and life in death was possible for them only because of their deep faith in God and the hope of his continued presence among them.

They showed signs of this faith and hope by saying spontaneously even in their darkest moments, "O God!", "The Bhagavan knows everything", "There is one above us. He will look after us", etc. At the outset we may be tempted to discount these words as fatalistic or meaningless sayings, or as mere symbols of a deep grief and sorrow. But psychologists would agree that free and spontaneous exclamations reveal the truth of our heart more than the prepared and conscious statements.

Hence perhaps we must dare to say that here we encountered "pure faith". When people had nothing to hang on to, nothing to rely on, they had only God as their support and sanctuary. From this faith they were able to move mountains: from the depth of their hopelessness they were able to gather slowly their shattered spirits, get a hold on their remaining resources, organise themselves once again and steadily come back to face the normal life with hope and purpose. It was in this miracle that we also, like the people, encountered the saving presence of God.

Similar was also our experience as volunteers in relief work. Faced with the magnitude of the human misery, we realised our inability and inadequacies. "Where to begin? How to organise? What to offer? How to console and comfort?" These were the moments we realised we needed hope beyond our hopes, strength beyond our strengths, and words beyond our words. They did come to us. It was an empowering from above. In this we realised the truth of St Paul's experience, "When I am weak then I am strong" (2 Cor 12 10).

The Place of Religions

Though outwardly the recent Delhi riots may have been seen as communal, there were deeper undercurrents of class struggle, cultural hatreds and political rivalries. Yet the role played by religious fanaticism in this whole story needs a special mention here. The age-old myth of India as a model of religious tolerance is exploded. Beneath the surface of our benevolent tolerance there are turbulent undercurrents of suspicion, hostility and incomprehension. It is no wonder that these monsters periodically show their ugly heads to get temporarily appeased

by the blood of innocent victims. In future we cannot tolerate this sort of tolerance. It is a misnomer for intolerance. If something is "tolerated" it means that it is not basically accepted and welcome as good. From this negative phase of tolerance India needs to enter into a positive phase of dialogue and collaboration, accepting the basic goodness of all religions and acknowledging the gains of religious pluralism for the future of India. This will require from us a new language, to be the bearer of a new culture.

Religions should not be used to divide people, and proselytism cannot become a cover for a hidden power game All the poor and powerless need to stand together and fight against the common enemy of injustice in its many ramifications, and struggle for human liberation in its wholeness. This has to become the goal of all religions. Here all can have a common ground to meet and a common cause to fight for. For this religions themselves need to undergo an inner conversion of dying to their insecurity and spirit of competition.

History Continues

When we were in the eye of the storm we thought that the end had come for the secular character of the Indian democracy. We thought that there was no one to replace Mrs Gandhi. The transition of power that followed and the announcement of general elections told us that though each individual is unique no one is indispensable or irreplaceable. In this we met a God who carries history constantly into a mysterious future. It is quite exciting to know that it is into this world and future that we are lovingly sent by God with the service and message of reconciliation (2 Cor 5·17, 18), with a hope beyond our hope and a strength beyond our strength.

P. AROKIADOSS, S.J.

*Fr P AROCKIADOSS lectures in the regional Theological of Arul Kadal, Madras, and is a doctoral student at Vidyajyoti, Delhi

Meditation

The Indian Face of Christ

The Indian face of Christ — what is it ? What would it be ?

It would be, first of all, what the Īsa Upanishad calls '*the face of Truth* hidden behind a circle of gold' And our prayer would be: "Unveil it, O God of Light, that I who love the truth may see !" I who love the truth, or ought to love Satya more than life How easily I can lie to myself and to others to 'save face', to save my reputation, through fear or through human respect ! And yet I know the face of Christ can be revealed to India today which seems so completely sunk in corruption by the shiningly incorrupt lives of Christians, so that those gazing on us may be reminded that "the immortal soul is pure like a drop of water on the lotus leaf" (Maitri Upanişad)

Secondly the Indian face of Christ would be a face that is *Inward turned* (antarmūkhi-dṛṣti) towards the Antaryamin (the Indwelling one) rather than drawn outwards to external objects of the senses Only thus would our Hindu brothers and sisters recognise in and through us "the Ātman (Spirit) who is hidden in all things as cream is hidden in milk" (Svetasvatara Upanişad) Then they would recognise the Spirit of Christ and joyfully exclaim as they look on us as though they were looking on the face of Christ Jesus "The Spirit far away within thee is my own inmost Spirit !"

Thirdly the Indian face of Christ would be *simple*, one, one with the One "who is in the sun and in the fire and in the heart of Man He who knows this is one with the One "(Maitri Upanişad) They would see and see that we too can see "the same Self in all beings and all beings in the Self (Isa Upanisad and the Bhagavad Gitā) They would then begin to understand what the Bible means by loving "one's neighbour as one's Self I recall thanking a fellow traveller in an Indian train many years ago for serving me with tea several times on a long journey by quoting Jesus' teaching when we give another a cup of cold water in His Name we give it to Him He answered, "Why to another ? You are my Self ' It was my first encounter with a practical Advaitin

The Indian face of Christ would then be recognised too through those of us who are seen to believe that *God is ONE however and wherever He is worshipped in Spirit* 'neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem but in spirit and in truth (St John) This would mean too recognising Christ in the face of those who would be *equally at ease with all* eating with the rich pharisee or asking a drink of the out-caste Samaritan woman Is He not in the hearts of all ?" (Bhagavad Gitā)

Fourthly, the Indian face of Christ would therefore be *fearless*, "for he who sees all beings in his Self, and who sees his Self in all being loses all fear" — how often one reads this in the Upaniṣads, and how often one hears Jesus tell His disciples, "Fear Not! It is I! Why are ye fearful?" The Indian Face of Christ would be of one who has received, — and is therefore able to give to others — *abhayadān*, the gift of fearlessness; a gift India — and indeed all our poor loveless threatened world — needs so badly today! What does anyone have to fear when he or she looks on a Face serene and peaceful, sure of and secure in God's all-pervading presence which is LOVE?

And this Love is shown through *active compassion*. Therefore the Indian Face of Christ is Karuṇamaya *Compassionate* This is expressed in works of selfless service (Karma Yoga) — in trying to remove results of centuries of oppression, injustice.

— first by ourselves practising *Vairagya*, *Asteya*, *Aparigraha* (Non-attachment, non-possession and non-storing) so that we do not live a first world life even in a third world country, so that we do not have more than we need (is it really essential for instance to eat more than one square meal a day in a country where millions are starving, to possess comforts and conveniences, when so many are homeless and without essentials?)

— secondly by removing *Avidya* (non-knowledge) through works of education, primary education — neglected in India for over 150 years — ever since the British multiplied and laid stress on higher (university) education, so that even today millions are illiterate, living in dirt and squalor, while thousands are being 'turned out' as graduates who can neither think for themselves nor earn a decent living. Education is needed perhaps even more than bread in India The Compassionate Face of Christ would be then the *Face of an Educator* bent over His children — for of such is made the Kingdom of Heaven For spirituality and theology unless integrated into daily life and overflowing into 'active contemplation' can remain sterile — like knowledge that is not transformed into love For God is knowledge and love

And that is why finally the Indian Face of Christ is *Trinitarian*. It reflects by its radiance the Heart of Christ living within Itself His Love-life with the Father, which is the Spirit, Christ united to the Father through the Spirit The Father is being (*Sat*); in the Son is the Father-knowing Himself, being aware of Himself, His Consciousness (*Cit*); and the Love between the two is perfect Bliss (*Ananda*). This Trinitarian Love life in the Interior of Christ is seen shining in the Light of His Face as *Saccidānanda*, — one of the earliest names of God which is still venerated and to many most meaningful — in this land of the Gaṇgā and the Himalayas, of the Vedas and the Vedanta, of the Upaniṣads and the Bhagavad Gitā.

Vandana R S C.J.

Correspondence

Evangelization and Baptism

Dear Father Editor,

A more useful task perhaps might be to question the theory that holds sway in official circles and is applied widely in what was formerly known as mission countries namely, the theory about the need of planting of the Church all over the universe, by building visible institutions everywhere, even in such districts which have been known for centuries for their lack of interest in, and even opposition to, the Faith. Fr Devadass tells us that he has spent most of his missionary life in Uttar Pradesh and parts of Madhya Pradesh. We have only to consult the Catholic Directory about the number of priests and Catholics in dioceses like Allahabad, Lucknow and others. There are 72 priests in Allahabad Archdiocese for only, 7700 Catholics, and one parish in Lucknow diocese counts only 7 Catholics. Facing a staunch Hindu population that has been strongly attached to their religion for centuries and has resisted Moghul domination and Moslem pressure, these priests probably spend their days running farms and organizing relief work, and end in frustration. For those who are zealous and want to preach the gospel there is no alternative but to speak about the love of Christ for all men without expecting any commitment of faith. Their listeners will have no objection to add one more deity to the proverbial 33 crores of the Hindu pantheon.

Christ however expected and even demanded a faith commitment when he preached and cured the sick. When he did not meet with it, as in his home town at Nazereth he either left the place or violently reproached his opponents, as with the Pharisees. Thanks be to God there are regions in India, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, the tribal districts of Bihar and Madhya Pradesh, large tracts of Andhra Pradesh, where thousands are ready for a commitment of faith to the word of Christ. Young zealous priests are wanted there to gather in the harvest. Why should we sacrifice men to plant the visible Church where it is not wanted, for the sake of a pet theory of missiologists of a past generation?

Catholic Church Kalyanpur,
P O Kundarah 743 302
24 Parganas W Bengal

Y de STEENHAULT, SJ

Dear Sir

This is how I see the question of conversion. "Conversion" — metanoia — is turning towards God (not only "away from sin" as is often said). It is essentially a personal matter, a conscience issue. Once the Call of the Flute is heard within, there can be no hesitation in responding, no price is considered too great to pay. But the Call has to be heard from within though God may use external agents who may draw our attention to the imperiousness of the Call. Once the soul has been enthralled by His Beauty the weakness of God is seen to be stronger than the strength of man. His foolishness wiser than man's wisdom. And so like Mirabai one can sing: "*Sadhu sang beth beth lok laj khoi*". What does losing one's reputation in men's sight matter? Or like Francis one can merrily walk away naked from his uncomprehending father's cloth shop.

This is quite different from trying to "convert" others, i e to make them change their religion. God Realization or Liberation (*Moksha*) — "salvation of souls", in the old theological language — is really a question of an Awakening in "the cave of one's heart". Only the Spirit who knows the depth of God can touch also the core of man's being. We should have enough respect for each one's faith or re-

ligion, enough trust in God's love for all, to know that each person must be allowed to find his/her way to God. All we are expected to do to help our fellow-pilgrims on the way is to pour out our love — the Love within our hearts, who IS God — at their feet in humble service.

How is the Christian to understand Christ's command: "Go and teach the whole world ... " ? I understand these words as: "Live as I have lived among you and taught you by my example; love as I have loved you — unto death — that others seeing your life may glorify your Father-and-Mother in heaven". The rest is His work in the hearts of His people. All we can do is to point to the Sun, it is unto them then to turn — like the sun-flowers — within, find the Self-Luminous One, the *antarjyoti*. The Christian value we have to preach is the practice of the Presence.

VANDANA, R.S.C.J.

Prophets

Sir,

With reference to R. J. Raja, S J 's article "Prophets for the Third World" (October 1984), otherwise an excellent article, I would like to ask just *how* he came to the conclusion that ". .female prophets .play their role in a minor key"?

How minor is the role of a liberator of her people, such as Debora; or a wise counselor consulted by kings, such as Hulda ? To say nothing of Miriam, who is explicitly mentioned in Micah 6 4 as one of the three leaders through whom God brought Israel out of Egypt

I would also like to argue the point that "the non-violent force of love and caring is found more naturally in women than in men" One need not refer to such great names like Erich Fromm (e g. *Sex and Character*). At least experientially, in my own personal life, I have found that this force of love and caring is a basically *human* trait, not necessarily limited to the female sex Is it not the fact that it is extolled when exhibited by women, and deplored or ridiculed when exhibited by men, that makes it appear "more natural" for women to be loving and caring etc etc ?

This, too, is part of the oppression — of women *and* men — that may start at the womb And to recognise this, at all levels, is the beginning of human liberation. God created women and men in God's image — *not* some more "Godly" than others !

Jakarta

Marianne KATAPPO

Book Reviews

Ecumenism

The Bishop of Rome By J M R TILLARD OP Translated by John De Satge London SPCK, 1983 Pp xii-242 £ 6 50

Fr J M R Tillard is a French Canadian dominican who has had much experience in the field of ecumenics For many years he was one of the Catholic Theologian members of the WCC's Commission on Faith and Order This experience of meeting other Christians at the deep level of faith has enabled Fr Tillard like so many others before him to feel the anguish of disunity in a very personal way Tillard is a perceptive man and he knows that the Catholic Church could do a lot more than it does to push forward more effectively towards Christian union *The Bishop of Rome* is Tillard's word of encouragement spoken in the Spirit to his own Roman Catholic Church

The office of the bishop of Rome remains still a big boulder on the road to Christian unity *The Bishop of Rome* is a historico-theological study of the office of the pope in the context of the desire for reconciliation among Christians The book is divided into three major parts Part one bears the title 'The Pope More Than a Pope?' Tillard starts with the ecumenical setting other Christians seem today to be more open to the office of the papacy as the servant of Christian faith and unity The papacy is being called to respond to this situation One of the important elements of this response is an interpretation of *Pastor Aeternus* of Vatican I that fits today's ecumenical context without compromising 'the controlling insight of the 1870 definition (p 18) Vatican II attempted this but with 'fragile results Progress is difficult because there still lingers on in the Roman Latin Church an attitude that makes of the pope a kind of super-monarch a ruler who is 'over and above' other bishops This attitude tending to magnify the figure of the pope is called 'ultramontanism' (The term comes from the last century It is European the pope lives 'beyond the mountains', the Alps, if one happened to be in France) Tillard sketches the historical build-up of this attitude The reader discovers many interesting things Among them A Sulpician priest, adviser to the bishop of Sens records in his diary the remark of a Roman prelate who said, "I am very happy that the bishops are coming to Rome, for they will see that the pope is everything and the bishops nothing" (p 22) In 1862 bishop Pie uttered these words "After the real presence of Jesus Christ in the sacrament of the Eucharist nothing can make us feel and touch more closely the Saviour's person than the sight of his Vicar on earth Speaking personally, I have never climbed the steps which lead to the place of his throne without gasping from that emotion made up of fear, respect and love which one experiences in approaching the Tabernacle" (p 23)! Pie was not alone Many spoke of 'a real presence of Christ under the pontifical species" (p 199)! Such devotion has its rewards in 1872 Pie was a Cardinal and could say, "Peter is on this earth the Vicar and continuing person [sic] of Christ ' (*ibid*)

This exaltation of the pope to a quasi-divine level was not something totally novel In 1297 the Colonna cardinals stated that "in some way [the pope] is God that is to say, he is God's vicar" – *quodammodo Deus est, id est Dei vicarius* (p 23) Those staunch defenders of the papacy the Jesuits stated in their journal *La Civilta Cattolica* "When the pope meditates it is God who thinks in him" (*ibid*) A modern reader may find himself humorously tickled when he reads this today, but those blackrobes of yesteryear were deadly serious about what they said Let this suffice for a taste of this section and let us summarise in Tillard's words "The ultramontane expressions met in our survey can thus claim a long pedigree They have been smoothed by the usage of centuries, which explains why it is so hard to rid the Catholic mind of them They form part of an ethos which has confused several levels of authority properly belonging to the bishops of Rome,

resulting in an interplay of claims sometimes provoked by unclear historical situations, sometimes thought necessary to restore the Church to the purity of the gospel, sometimes fed by an appetite for power. It is hard to sort out. . . It cannot be denied that in Catholic attitudes generally, as much as possible is made of the pope (p. 59)

In part two, "The Pope — Bishop of Rome," Tillard shows how the primacy of this bishop is based on the importance of the see Rome is the place where the apostles Peter and Paul gave their lives in martyrdom The see of Rome was always accorded a primacy of honour because of these apostolic foundations It was also looked upon as having a special witness to give in preserving the unity of the churches In this part the history of the development of the papal primacy is elaborated The relation of Peter and Paul — and how over the centuries Paul's name got eclipsed — is interestingly explained Much material from the Fathers of the Church is given which helps to see the pope as what the tradition of the church has seen him to be — the bishop of Rome

Part three bears the title "The Servant of Communion" In it Tillard seeks to show how what the faith of the church has held about the bishop of Rome can interact with the desires of christians to enable the pope to serve the hastening of christian unity In this part Tillard returns once again to the discussions of Vatican I and to what the bishops who opposed the definition of papal infallibility were trying to say He deals with what a bishop is and what is the place of the bishop of Rome among the other bishops This section holds a heavy dose of theological argument The words of the Anglican scholar, Owen Chadwick, are fair, and are not, I think, too wide of the mark. [Tillard] has the clearest of heads and most sensitive of minds Yet the argument starts inevitably to sound like a school question, pros and contras, on the one hand and on the other, how to maintain a universal jurisdiction while maintaining the apostolic rights of bishops, until this enquiry which is in deadly earnest for the pastoral sake of the Church, begins to sound like a game of the lecture-room. Even the theologically instructed reader might feel baffled at the idea of successfully explaining to a reasonably intelligent layman the notion of "corporate personality" as applied to the "identity" between a universal primate and the group he "represents".— (*JTS* 35 [1984], 270-1).

Fr Tillard has written a book that deserves to be read. That it has had some impact on at least one church dignitary perhaps appears in the following item from *The Tablet* of 11 August 1984: The Cardinal of Toronto, Archbishop Emmett Carter has warned against the temptation to see the Pope as a 'kind of super-bishop' in view of the forthcoming papal visit to Canada Commenting on the effect that papal visits have often both on and through the media, the cardinal said that "the strength of the Pope's personality may reinforce a false and exaggerated view of the papacy" Such exaggeration, he said, promotes the notion of the Pope as a kind of super-bishop, between us and God, with the other bishops little more than branch managers. "That is bad theology" he commented, adding that the Pope himself, however, cannot be held responsible for this sort of distortion of his role What is encouraging about this is that it means that somewhere there are some church dignitaries who actually read what theologians have written These good people have written so many good things and they must sometimes feel a sense of frustration at the hesitation of the leaders of the church to use the fruits of their researches

I want to give a layman the last word in this review A year before the French edition of Tillard's book, Peter Nichols published his *The Pope's Divisions* He has a pregnant paragraph that reveals a "converging Spirit" Nichols writes on p 166 "One pope, one day, is going to have to decide whether he is more a bishop among bishops or a monarch among functionaries — that is the choice seen by those who seek to place the Curia in contradiction to the International Synod of Bishops That decision will be among the most crucial any pope could make Some see it as the key to the Church's prospects for credibility in the future Journeys, mass audiences, spectacular visits, only conceal the issue" Tillard has made a great contribution to highlighting this issue For that, may God bless him Roman LEWICKI, S J

Towards Christian Reunion By Luis M BERMEJO, S J (Jesuit Theological Forum Studies 2), *Anand, Gujarat Sahitya Prakash*, 1984 Pp 316 Sewn Paper back Rs 35 $ 9, Full Cloth Bound Rs 40 $ 12

Despite certain appearances the movement towards Christian unity is pro-

growing. By now many agreements have been reached. Yet obstacles still exist, not the least being the papal authority, particularly the universal pastoral responsibility of the See of Peter, its primacy and its infallibility

Fr Bermejo has been teaching for many years in the faculty of theology of Pune He is also an enthusiastic ecumenist After much reflexion and study he comes out with a book, which tackles mostly, though not exclusively, the role of the papal office in Christianity The book is well produced, it is repleted with references The author focuses mostly on relations between Western Christians, though the Orthodox are not entirely ignored In the first section, chapters 1 to 4, he examines closely Vatican I The New Testament is very much made use of Owing perhaps to the fact that some of the chapters appeared first as articles of periodicals, one feels sometimes a certain repetitiveness

Fr Bermejo is quite right in pointing out some of the major difficulties connected with the infallibility of the ecumenical councils the development of such doctrines as papal infallibility and universal jurisdiction One cannot however trust history only In matters of Christian belief, history cannot be the last criterion not more say than sociology and mere experience This is all the more true because there is no history worth the name without interpretation Often theologians misinterpret history (this does not mean that Fr Bermejo falls victim to this tendency) Even in matters of exegesis we must admit that exegetes do not enjoy the charism of infallibility When a certain consensus arises on the interpretation of a text only then could we venture to say that a commonly admitted interpretation is the best possible available

Concerning relations between churches the author seems to think that somehow all churches are equal partners This seems to be the logical conclusion of his view according to which a doctrine held by the Catholic Church but which is not accepted by all other churches cannot claim to belong to the deposit of faith According to my humble opinion such a statement overlooks the fact that it did happen in former times that at a moment of crisis, say Arianism, the Catholic Church held the definition of Nicaea against all odds, despite most of the church leaders compromising to various anti-Nicaean parties So much so that St Jerome could exclaim 'One morning the world [= the Christian world] awoke Arian...'. A mere democratic criterion of the right doctrine cannot be accepted in Christianity. And to refer almost everything exclusively to the New Testament is to fall in line with the 'back to the Bible' of the originators of the Reform, and tantamount to fundamentalism Today not even Protestants, Anglicans, or Orthodox would accept this.

I must offer my criticism on some points On p. 66, the axiom 'Outside the church there is no salvation', proposed by St Cyprian of Carthage was intended only for two schismatic movements in the church of his times, never for non-Christians Can we also really come to the conclusion that no council was ever regarded as infallible? It is quite certain that the Byzantine Orthodox churches regard the first seven Ecumenical Councils as their ultimate criteria of orthodox faith Is this infallibility or not? Another example: In A D 784 the then united church, East and West, met in council at Nicaea and defined the genuine worship of images The Reform of the 16th century rejected it Who was right, the fathers of Nicaea, or the divines of seven centuries later?

On p 131 it is said that since the 13th century bishops were mostly elected by Rome Well, in spite of the references quoted in footnote 97, I dare say that historically this is not accurate Between the early Middle Ages and the 19th century episcopal elections underwent many ups-and-downs Before the end of the 18th century, except for very few places, they were actually handled by the kings, with the ultimate, often too easy, approval of Rome In fact the centralisation of the papacy really begins seriously in the 19th century, though not without a long time of preparation since about the 14th century Can we still speak of the split of 1054 between Constantinople and Rome? It is well known today that it was not a split but a failed attempt at reconciliation, and the rest of the churches remained united in spirit and practise until about the middle of the 13th century at least

The second section of the book deals with the recent series of agreements between Anglicans and Catholics. The series is impressive and the comments of Fr Bermejo quite relevant In a last section he discusses the 'ecclesial' character of many a Protestant body. This is

Continued on p. 15

Vidyajyoti

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In This Issue

The focus of our articles this month is Spirituality, and they are largely written by people engaged in active life. Fr L. De Raedt, a veteran missionary, offers us some practical suggestions for improving, or perhaps re-starting, our life of prayer by adapting to our personal needs the well-known method of the Prayer of Jesus, which the Orthodox tradition has developed in the past. This prayer has many affinities with Indian methods of prayer, including the *nāma-japa*, and if adopted may certainly help the prayer life of many people — whether "Perplexed Parish Priests" or just simple Christians!

The topic of the psalms as means of Christian prayer today and in India has been much discussed in VIDYAJYOTI during the last year. Fr R J RAJA, professor of Scripture, vindicates the permanent value of these immortal texts, when properly used and understood in their context In a letter to the Editor, Fr C. M CHERIAN also comments on the controversy this topic has raised in our pages.

Spirituality needs to be authentic i e it must grow from the specific cultural and spiritual perceptions of a person or a community that live freely in the Spirit Ms Filemena GIESE writes on the way in which the Goan community has actually lived the life of the Spirit in spite of many outside controls, and on the outstanding model of holiness and priestly zeal which it gave us in the person of the remarkable and often forgotten Fr Joseph Vaz One may wish that the Indian and the Sri Lankan church would make united efforts to promote the canonization of this valuable model of Christian and apostolic life for all Third World countries, so that we may praise the Lord for the gifts of grace manifested in our midst.

Finally Fr Raymond D'SILVA, for long associated with activist Christian groups, proposes a spirituality for a school that will challenge and help teachers and managers in fulfilling their mission in the church and the country.

An Adapted Jesus Prayer

L. DE RAEDT, S.J.*

MASS media, continual change, an avalanche of papers, books and reviews, a multiplicity of seminars and training camps, all these have put a tremendous strain on our mind. "No time any more for morning prayers!" somebody quipped. The span of our jaded attention has been drastically reduced. And many a Perplexed Parish Priest (PPP) has to be a jack of all trades and master in none, missing the consolation of a job well done. Other factors also keep a stranglehold on our feelings: the need for efficiency and performance! Time-saving has become a shibboleth. Our young men start speed reading even before they start on the breviary! Add to this a lack of respect for tradition, an impatience with all that grows slowly. Psycho-somatic diseases are often the result of this style of living. This is the plight of many a modern man: lack of serenity, security, serependity. It is a small wonder that flower children, Jesus youths, hippies, students, have tried to escape all this and to surround themselves with an atmosphere of calm and quiet joy.

As a consequence, we are psychologically much weaker than our ancestors. It is unrealistic not to take this into account when we want to pray. We have to "cooperate with the inevitable" which is another way of saying: with the will of God. Since so much in our lives is unforeseen, unexpected, upsetting, we are forced to practise a spirituality *du provisoire* (of the provisional). Ours is a spirituality of weakness. Certainly novices *should*, and saints *can* pray for one hour without interruption. But how many others can do it? When one hears an old professor of theology on his deathbed declare that he has not enjoyed one moment of consolation his life long or when in a group of half a dozen missionaries in the field not a single one could declare to his superior that he had still a fixed time for meditation, then one feels something is wrong somewhere. In a world-wide enquiry conducted by the S.V.D.'s for their personnel only 49% declared to have a fixed time for formal meditation. And what is worse — and will no doubt astonish many — the percentage of the "post-Vatican" group

*Fr. Louis De Raedt is a missionary in Baikunthpur (497335), in the Surguja Dt. of M.P.

was much lower, 30%. So, when one reads e.g., sister Sara Grant's writings on *nididhyāsana*, one is inclined to ask oneself: " Which is the practical solution to the present need ?"

How many PPP's have thrown up the sponge in desperation, or taken to a book, as one would say "taken to drink"? Because they despair of meditation, they have given it up as a bad job Some of us have become dry sticks, devoid of inspiration and consolation. Is it not abnormal that one should spend or try to spend a life-time praying and never have a moment of consolation ? Never really come to like it ?

Lack of appetite is a sure sign that something is wrong with the patient If there is no attraction to prayer, it will not be persevered in St Augustine knew this very well. Can one find many or even one reference in the whole of Hindu devotional literature to real desolation ? Is this a Western disease ? Are some of us going about this business in the wrong way ? Or must one distinguish between sensitive desolation and spiritual desolation ? Is this not begging the question ?

I suppose that for most of us, PPP's, to enter the cave of the heart or to find the key to that door, to know the "open sesame", will always remain a remote possibility One sometimes wonders whether mysticism, just like prophetism, is not a time-bound phenomenon Is it some consolation to read in St Teresa of Jesus "I can assure you that the best way to acquire the prayer of quiet is not to ask for it"? The fact is that her nuns, without asking for it, nearly all seem to have received it

With most of us, PPP's, the case is quite different · we realize only too well that the shrivelling up of our feelings is not exactly the dark night of the soul, but perhaps the result of gross neglect Or, to be milder, an occupational disease We also know fully well that mooning away half an hour of meditation is not the same thing as emptying the soul, but pure loss of time Spiritual drowsiness, *des reveries religieuses sur un thème théologique* (religious dreaming on a theological theme), is not the same as the prayer of quiet.

Of late we have had one consolation — and some PPP's confessed that retreats became a practical proposition. charismatics with their soul-journeys, mutual encouragement, appeals to feeling and imagination have watered many a dry stick. Furthermore, the soul-stirring Indian *bhajans* have initiated a trend of hymning that works like an incantation and leads to prayer. But the unlucky PPP alone in his

room or walking at dusk on a lonely sand-road, can hardly practise this, unless he be blessed with a musical voice and a poetical soul.

* * *

We, the PPP's, therefore need a reliable, variable, adaptable form of prayer, a prayer for all seasons, inspiring, a stand-bye for difficult times, in one word, a fool-proof prayer. Such a prayer exists. It has now been in vogue in the West since 10 or 20 years, Indians have always practised it. I speak of Indians who have never lost the Hindu cultural tradition or who of late have come back to it. This prayer is the so-called *Jesus Prayer*, or *hesychastic prayer* (from the Greek *hesuchos*, calm, at least this is the most likely derivation). The famous *Story of the Russian Pilgrim* was the chief cause of its spread in the West.

Some kind of Jesus Prayer (J P) has of course always existed. When the psalmist speaks of "meditating on the torah", he may have meant repeating the words of the Law slowly and lovingly. It is probably such a devout soul who composed the interminable psalm 119 a psalm that made a famous French author weep tears of consolation, but probably leaves us pretty unaffected. The Fathers of the Desert also knew this kind of christian *jāp*. And even if the generalized use of the Christian *jāp-mālā*, the rosary, dates from the time of St Dominic, the thing itself must have been much older.

But the Jesus Prayer as such originated in the East in the 5th century and flourished there without interruption till the 18th century, when it knew a time of neglect, to be revived with the publication of the *Philokalia* by Makarios of Corinth and Nicodemus the Hagiorite in 1782. This important work does not always mention the J P by name, but its spirit pervades the whole book. It is the most complete anthology existing on the J P, the mystical book *par excellence* of the Greek Orthodox Church.

In Russia the J P gained popularity through the publication at Kazan about the year 1870 of the *Sincere Tales of a Russian Pilgrim*. In the sixties and seventies of this century, quite late, translations of the *Pilgrim's Tale* and other books about the J P made their appearance in the West in the various European languages. E g *On the Invocation of the Name of Jesus*, by a monk of the Eastern Church, 1970. In Hindi we have *Yātrik, Ek agyāt Rūsi Sant* (1968)[1]

1 The booklet is/was available with Fr Wiesinger, Shankuntala Publishing House, 10 Garden Homes, 1st Road, Khar Bombay 400052.

The appearance of this booklet in the West seems to have corresponded to a natural demand. It was providential. The Russian Pilgrim describes his experiments with the J.P. (for some of us experimentation, a life-long process, seems to be the price of prayer; experimentation and adaptation, without ceasing). The Pilgrim carried the *Philokalia* with him on all his journeys through Russia and Siberia and finally on his way to the Holy Land, where he disappeared without leaving a trace, not even a name.

The Pilgrim repeated the simple formula, "Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me" up to 12,000 times a day and even oftener, during all his walking hours along the endless roads and steppes of Russia and Siberia. He did this during 13 years or more. Walking, working, waiting, wandering, during his whole conscious life, he kept on praying and breathing, synchronising both. So that finally the prayer became automatic and accompanied each breath, and even, so at least he says, each heartbeat And like a haunting tune one cannot get out of one's head, he could no longer live without the J P.

For thirteen long years the Pilgrim kept to this one formula, never saying any other prayer, as far as one can make out from the booklet, and never tiring of it He seems to have prayed during his sleep. In any case as soon as he would awake, his lips starting moving by themselves The very fact of never changing the formula helped the automatism Change would have spoilt it

This is the Jesus Prayer in its pure and no doubt the most effective form For those, namely, who can afford to follow the Pilgrim's example and do nothing else but pray.

This is not the case of the PPP But on a more modest scale he could attempt to practise some adapted kind of J P. The J.P. in its pure form is not everybody's cup of tea A milder form, adapted to non-Russians, could be a real help to many a PPP. Fr Doyle of course is famous for his thousands of aspirations But nobody knows what exactly his calculations mean.

* * *

What then is this adapted Jesus Prayer ? From the breviary's verses, responses, short readings, hymns, or from any other part of the breviary one can cull short phrases, ejaculations or prayers, and recite them with the help of the rosary beads. Five phrases for five decades, each phrase being repeated ten times, adding in between the 'Glory' and the 'Our Father'.

The beads are nearly essential. Even a short experience will teach you that just the fact of keeping the rosary in one hand prevents distraction and keeps the mind from wandering. This is especially the case when one goes on a journey, sits in a bus, or cycles, or waits in an office

The source of these aspirations is as vast as the whole Christian spirituality in its multiform aspects. One can choose an inspiring prayer "O beauty so ancient, so new" Or a litany of the Sacred Heart, or of the Name of Jesus Or a Charismatic hymn "I have decided to follow Jesus" (the tune may help) Or one of the Latin hymns of the *Laudes Vespertinae* like the "Adoro te devote" (we may have to relearn some by heart they are very useful on a journey as one can start off at once inspiration is not needed or, rather the hymn supplies it) We can also use a Negro spiritual or what passes for it "When the saints are marching on"

Here in India we possess an ocean full of pearls in the bhakti poets Tulsidas can supply us with a hundred names for God our Father His incomparable similes can not fail to inspire even a tired PPP, to water any dry stick.

> When once the Mahanadi was bridged by a king
> the ant saw that crossing was a manageable thing (Grace)
>
> Wind-raised a speck of dust will change into rain
> but water-sucked it goes down the drain (Grace)
>
> Bhakti is the rain the bhakta the grain
>
> In the palms a flower of bliss
> Gives both hands a scented kiss (The good and the bad)
>
> (Gospels) shine like bright rivers
> Read them of peace they are givers
>
> If the standard is God's grace
> Prayer is the flag-staff we raise
>
> Bitter smoke will change its natural bent
> When an agarbatti lends it its scent (Grace, once again)
>
> The villain's maina to cursing is raised,
> The sadhu's says 'God be praised

The incomparable Tulsidas! But other sources also The Vedas, the Upanishads, even some Puranas and Kávyas may supply prayers and thoughts Humility and repentance may not always be apparent in some areas of Hindu literature But the bhakti poets are full of it

Evidently the most abundant source of prayers will always be the breviary It is a source of prayers both abundant and, what is essential, renewable It is a real treasure-house The prayers have been

selected, collected, arranged and even, through the context, explained. The breviary is a mine of gold, a cask of heavenly wine, a cache of treasure, a store of provisions. The Bible, the Fathers and twenty centuries of spirituality went into its making.

This is not to say that one cannot find inspiring matter elsewhere. It is not a bad idea at all to collect prayers, wherever one finds them. And especially to make one's own prayers e.g., by re-writing the psalms. Or by using the words of the gospels to make prayers out of them, by putting them in the second person and addressing them to Christ or to the Father.

In the long run, however, even the most beautiful flowers fade. Even a collection of your favourites will not inspire you indefinitely. Then is the time for change. *Gustus est in varietate*. But, as I said, the three volumes of the breviary are so rich in content that variety is really no problem.

Let us take an example in the Christmas season I copy from the breviary either at one go, or better, day by day, the phrases that inspire me, that strike me *now* I say "now" because next year the situation or the mood may require something different, there will be other needs, other deeds This is why it is advisable to make two collections of prayers, one permanent, so to say, on which one can fall back any time But another one, a variable and nearly daily changing collection, following the inspiration of the moment

The Missal also may yield some flowers, but they probably will be the same as those of the breviary, because the source is the same the Bible, the Fathers, spiritual writers

What are the qualities most desirable in such prayers? Concentration, simplicity and artistic value If they follow the liturgical cycle, they will naturally possess a whole aura of added meanings The liturgical value and the artistic value will then coincide But any formula that appeals to you will do E g *miseria misericordia, Jesu Fili David, miserere mei, tantilli hominis et tanti peccatoris* (Fr Roothaan) ("Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me", "such a puny man and such a great sinner")

Here for instance is a string of five aspirations, extracted from one single responsory of the breviary (1) Look towards him and be radiant; (2) Let your face not be ashamed; (3) He has taken us out of the power of darkness; (4) It is possible for us to join the Saints; (5) We shall inherit the light. Since these five phrases are to be found in one single responsory they have unity and even gradation. Which is all

to the good. Because the "mind either finds unity or makes it". Another principle in literature is that the mind is attracted to the concrete. Now the liturgy is something concrete.

These ejaculatory prayers, these *tir rinati* ("We shoot them like arrows", said St Augustine) recited with the aid of the beads (the most practical anti-distraction remedy) and changed after every decade, will carry us along as a skiff on a smooth current They will even lead to real meditation. For though the words within a decade may be the same, the meaning, the colouring changes continually Words are only the basis of thoughts Who prevents you from leaving your boat and visit some old castle or admire some beautiful scenery i e, to enter the cave of the heart ?

Indeed the J P should lead to meditation "Vocal prayer as much as needed, but not more", should be the motto But even on this point, there is an infinite variety of tastes and dispositions Besides, the whole of this adapted Jesus Prayer will seem artificial and slightly vulgar to those who do not need any crutches Only be careful not to throw away your crutches too soon You may fall flat on your face like the pilgrim at Lourdes "who had too much faith" !

One could query, "Why did the Pilgrim not switch over to meditation and contemplation ?" Why indeed ? Probably because this was his way i e, his vocation, and he found in this simple formula everything he needed, salvation and contemplation Besides, his starets had directed him to stick to one formula and never to change Change would have interfered with the automatism of the prayer After all the Orthodox Church knew more about such matters than the Latins If one starts on some kind of J P, one will soon experience that once breath and prayer have been linked, one of them tends to bring in the other, i e one takes a deep breath and automatically a prayer rises to one's lips

For an ordinary PPP there is no need to stick to "automatism" Whenever he feels inspired to do so, he can repeat a certain formula a dozen or more times change it, reflect on it etc Precautions and preparation are of course needed first of all the beads the great means against distraction Secondly, the immediate preparation Art and prayer are rarely improvised If you want to have compact, inspiring formulas ready at hand, you have to collect them Uniform formulas and flat sentences will not help you On the contrary they will kill all inspiration. So preparation is needed. You prepare firewood for the chulha, petrol for the motorcycle, manure for the garden. Similarly for prayer. A small diary in your breast-pocket is more

handy on a journey than a thick volume in the depths of your travelling bag. A large garden full of flowers may be a "joy forever" but a small bouquet is what you need.

Often the difficulty in prayer is the start, to get into it, to find inspiration. Thought is self-generating. Start thinking and especially speaking or writing and you will be led to what you did not think of at first. Thinking, speaking and writing are creative in their very use. It is the inspiration that is the real motor. Prayer also has its own momentum Once the shuttle-cock is thrown up, the game is on. Or, as the pessimist said, the trouble starts.

An oral basis is always a great, often a necessary, help for prayer. The intelligence has to be illuminated, the heart stirred. Quantity and verbosity are not the need; they are not needed at all. Interior taste and consolation are the main thing Just as a drunkard needs a post to keep steady, just so the tired PPP needs the J.P. to start and to keep going. Or to come back to it, if he has given it up.

If with initiative and experimentation and perseverance one tries out the J.P., one should succeed in passing at least half an hour in prayer. If one wants a full hour of prayer, one can always switch over to another method. In any case perpetual vigilance is the price of successful prayer

There is no such great need of breathing techniques or half-baked psychological methods Otherwise one day one's chest may have to be examined, if not one's head This is not to say that "postures", vipassanā exercises, regular breathing, cannot be helpful. But their use for most PPP's will always be limited

The J P. is no transcendental meditation, a kind of soporific, calming the nerves, neither a meaningless mantra, conducive to good health It should be repeated with understanding, but especially with love It is why it is often referred to as "the prayer of the heart". (Both are not identical, though) In the J P. the heat of prayer should engender meditation Through the intellect we reach the heart and through the heart the Father. He will give us his "darshan" if this is his will.

A great protagonist of the J.P. is that greatest of all English mystical writers, the author of the *Cloud of Unknowing*. He wants us to express everything in one word, as 'God' or 'sin' and similar words, without going into details. Just as one would call out 'fire' or 'water' when a house is on fire, and with the same intensity.

I suppose Tibetans and other Buddhists could also teach us a thing or two about the prayer of the heart. You hear them muttering "om mani padme om"; then perhaps they will laugh their broad laugh; then, once more, "om. . ." the whole day long, a real prayer marathon. I do not want to ridicule or judge these fine people. Only to show that they also want to reduce their devotion to one single simple formula.

One Jesuit Father objected: "And what about the venerable tradition of the Society? What did we learn in the noviciate?" — "O.K., Father, do you want our young men to turn elsewhere for help, if not to Shangri-la, then at least to various gurus of sorts? Make prayer possible. Don't overload the donkey, that is the PPP, so that it collapses under its load of bricks even before reaching the building site. Even novices will soon discover that a 'proved' method, good enough for a cloister, is not necessarily adapted to the ministry in a poor jungle village.

There is another objection that this so-called Jesus Prayer is nothing else but a running away from meditation, a trick to avoid the hard labour of prayer. This might be true. But necessity knows no laws. And for some PPP's the situation cannot be worse than it is. "There must be a better way", is applicable here also.

The Jesus Prayer has another advantage. It cures the voluntarism and the cult of suffering of former times, the *agere contra* badly understood: "the drier the prayer the more meritorious", and, if I remember well, we were given to understand that both consolation and desolation were of about equal value. The natural (wrong) conclusion was that one should not pursue one more than the other. Whereas St Ignatius no doubt considered the state of consolation as our natural state and desolation as a real danger. Especially if prolonged.

Furthermore, in practising the J.P. we give more importance to the body, to poetry, to music and art. We are on the look-out for inspiring thoughts: this most often means ordinary thoughts put in remarkable form. Here, e.g., is one gem I found in the breviary for the feast of St Anne. She (1) sought the traceless foot-prints of your feet, (2) and took in her own hand a hand unseen, (3) and heard a voice whose silence was complete. Remarkable, no? But only if you have leisure and recite the breviary with attention will such pearls come to your notice. In 'ordinary' times one just speed-reads over these treasure-fields.

Another advantage of the J.P. is that one takes inspiration from the Bible. There is less danger of making our prayer a conversation with ourselves. I knew a priest who was making gestures during his meditation. I always thought he was making a speech to the good Lord, sort of trying to convince him.

Even if the formula of the J.P. consists of quite ordinary and simple words, still through it the soul is like an eagle winging its way into the blue, reaching the upper spheres, and then effortlessly hovering and gliding on the hot currents and hardly moving a wing. Once contact has been established with the Father through the J.P., a one line phrase can lead to real meditation and perhaps contemplation. Or, to change the comparison, the skiff glides effortlessly on the smooth current; there is no need of rowing any more. "Iron touched by quicksilver becomes gold," said Tulsidas Simple words warmed by the heart reach the Father. "A thread of silk will shine even on a jute bag." Could one perhaps apply to the J.P. a cryptic saying of John Paul II: "Prayer is the strength of the weak and the weakness of the strong." Does this remind us of the Magnificat ?

In any case what Chenchiah has to say about prayer is to the point: "Hindu bhakti ploughs up tremendous emotional powers. Christian worship is tame and lacking in abandon and glow. It is too cautious and calculating. Intensive bhakti can be seen any day in Hinduism and affords a model which, with modifications demanded by Christianity, may well be copied" And further: "Generally Christians are incapable of staying in one posture They fidget and jump about like a cat on hot bricks" This is not very flattering for us Whatever be the truth of what Chenchiah says, it is a fact that even in a cultural back-water like the one the present writer is living in, one can hear all-night song-feasts going on in the village at the occasion of a puja or a festivity. And if one can judge from the noise generated and the enthusuasm shown, there is little doubt that the prayer-meeting is successful and, let us hope, efficacious a far cry from our so often dull sessions !

To sum up· the advantages of the J P are that it is (1) easy to start — no starting trouble ever, (2) easy to come back to — remember the beads; (3) easy to prepare, especially if one knows some hymns by heart; (4) easy to switch over to meditation, and (5), especially, it is a prayer of the heart.

Evidently tastes differ I apologize to all non-PPP's As to the PPP's, there are too many of them, especially "in the missions". to them I make no apology.

A Rejoinder to "The Psalms: Another View"[1]

R. J. RAJA, S.J.

INTENDED as a pastoral answer to the questions "Can Christians still pray the Psalms today? And is the Church justified in continuing to give them a privileged place in her official prayer?"[2], the article has unfortunately turned out to be a jeremiad against the Psalms. The author's tirade against the Psalms, especially the "Lament Psalms",[3] has unfortunately led him to cast undue aspersions on the Psalms as a whole. As one who for the past 12 years has profited much by the Psalms both through personal prayer and teaching them to and sharing with a number of groups (Fr Cherian's experience must be more than double of mine!), I would like that this rejoinder be not taken as a jeremiad nor a tirade (for I am not capable of either), not even as an apology for the Psalms (for they do not need one), but solely as a clarification (since it has been provoked by the article).

Throughout the article one comes across assumptions and assertions which no serious modern scholar of the Psalms would not deny as unscientific. Both *the substance* (the variety of theological, historical, ethical and eschatological perspectives) and *the tone* (the differences in literary form and style) of the different Psalms have amply shown that all the 150 Psalms were not written at one stroke by the pen of one industrious scribe – be he David or any other — and at one time.[4] Spanning a long period of 700-800 years (1000 BC-200 BC roughly), they present a wide range of Israel's history, belief and theology, written and sung by quite a few of the devout men of Israel.[5] There is hence

1 Cf. Subash ANAND, "The Psalms: Another View", VIDYAJYOTI, June-July 1984, pp. 270-282.

2 Ibid. p. 270.

3 In all, the author cites about 90 psalms, out of which 40 are Laments (of individuals and the community). The total number of the Psalms of Lament in the Psalter are roughly 50: a fact that speaks about the author's predilection for Laments, to score a point!

4 Right from the beginning of the article the author gives the impression that all the Psalms were written by one single author "*the Psalmist*", used 14 times in the whole article, most of them referring to one single individual as author of all the Psalms.

5 M. DAHOOD, *Psalms* III, AB 17A (New York, 1979, pp. xxxiv-xxxvi), I. SAMUTHIRAM, *The Psalms, Their Origin and Meaning* I, Bangalore, 1971, pp. 15-24, J. H. EATON, *Psalms*, London, 1967, pp. 14-15. A. WEISER, *The Psalms*, OTL, London, 1962, pp. 91-101.

such a cross-section of historical, theological, ethical and eschatological (not to add cultic and liturgical) visions permeating the whole Psalter, that it is too simplistic to pick up a few Psalms and show that YHWH is a "tribal God" as opposed to his being the God of all (cf. pp. 271-272); that the *ethic* of the Israelites is one of hate, narrowminded and legalistic (pp 273-275), as opposed to an ethic flowing from a religion of love; and that the *eschatology* presented here is "this-worldly" as opposed to the "other-worldly" (p. 273).

Granting that it is "only with the prophets that we have a view that can be justly called monotheism" (p. 271), granting even that there are some psalms that seem to reflect the idea of monolatry and henotheism, are we led to the blanket-conclusion that the Psalter presents "a tribal God", one in a vast pantheon ?

Modern commentators opine that in the phrase "what god is great like our God ?" (Ps 77 13), the term 'god' does not refer to a deity but to celestial beings[6] In the phrases "YHWH is to be feared above *all gods*" (96 4), "you are exalted far above *all gods*" (97 9), the term "all gods" is clarified in the respective contexts. In both 96. 5 and 97 7 the term "elohim" (all gods) is explained by "elilim" (wrongly translated 'idols'), which means nonentities or "naught"[7] Hence the comparison is not between YHWH and a pantheon, but YHWH and "non-gods". YHWH is the God of all. Even in Pss 115 4-8 and 135 15-18, the comparison is not between "our God" and "your gods", but between "our God" and "idols" ('assebchem' man-made representations), in which case, there is no acceptance of other gods There is only YHWH and he is the God of all[8]

Ps 86· 10 allows different translations "thou alone art God" (RSV), "you, O God, alone" (Dahood), "you alone are God" (GNB), "you God, you alone" (JB), "tu solus es Deus" (Vulg) If the Vulgate, RSV and GNB could be considered of any value as the translation of "atha Elohim lebadeka", then we have here an authentic affirmation of pure monotheism as is testified to in Dt 32,39 and elsewhere.

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6. Cf DAHOOD *Psalms* II, p 230; A. A. ANDERSON, *Psalms* II, London, 1981, p 559; WEISER, p. 529, where see, "Who is a God, great as the Lord ?".

7. ANDERSON, II, pp. 683-689; DAHOOD, *Psalms* II, p. 358, p. 362 translates it as "rags" meaning 'useless', 'nothing', etc

8. It is more probable that in these Pss the Psalmists do not speculate on the existence and the reality of these gods but mention them simply as an element of praise (115 and 135 are Hymns). We may also mention here that in the Hebrew language the difference between "being as opposed to non-being" and "more of being" as opposed to "less of being" is rather tenuous, and hence one may mean the other ! In our case, the greatness of God (in comparison) may mean unicity of God (in absolute terms).

One may say, that if an explicit, theoretical affirmation of monotheism has been found only in the prophets (cf. Is 41: 21ff; 44: 9ff; Jer 5:7; 16:20 etc.) a *practical and down to earth monotheism* pervades the whole Psalter. No better authority than Albright could be listened to here, since what he affirms with regard to the monotheism of the whole of the OT applies also aptly to the Psalms "The belief in the existence of only one God, who is the creator of the world and the giver of all life; the belief that God is holy and just, without sexuality of mythology; the belief that God is invisible to man except under special conditions and that no graphic nor plastic representation of Him is permissible, the belief that God is not restricted to any part of His creation, but is equally at home in heaven, in the desert or in Palestine, the belief that God is so far superior to all created beings, whether heavenly bodies, angelic messengers, demons or false gods, that He remains absolutely unique, the belief that God has chosen Israel by formal compact to be His favoured people, guided exclusively by laws imposed by Him."[9]

The best witnesses to monotheism in the Psalms in fine, are the *Hymns*[10] which sometimes in mythological terms speak of God as *creator* of heaven, earth and the nether world with all the beings in them, material and living (cf Pss 8, 33, 100, 104, 136, 148, etc.); as *preserver* who exercises providential control in history (cf 33, 104, 147 and besides, 36, 91, 121, 139, etc) and as *redeemer* who saves people from battle, oppression or evil (cf 114, 135-136, 146, 149, etc).

Abhorring and repulsive as they are, the cries of vengeance, curses and imprecations (which the article depicts as originating from a tribal mentality [1]) that almost pervade many of the Lament Pss, are surely an embarassment to Psalm-lovers ! Not only are they unchristian but also inhuman One begins to wonder if "all Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching the truth, rebuking error, correcting faults, and giving instruction for correct living" (2 Tim 3·16) ! One is compelled to ask, if the imprecation Pss could be used in prayer today

9 W F ALBRIGHT, *Archeology and the Religion of Israel*, Baltimore, 1942, p 116 Quite revealing in this connection is the article "The YHWH alone Movement and the Making of Jewish Monotheism" in B. Lang, *Monotheism and the Prophetic Minority*, Almond Press, 1983, where the author traces the development of Monotheism or "*YHWH-aloneism*" in four phases· the fight against Baal in the eighth century; Hosea, the reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah and finally 'the breakthrough to monotheism' after 586, seen in the Deuteronomistic history, Ezekiel and Second Isaiah, the most important sources of the *YHWH-alone movement* The author rightly contends that even amid the polytheistic cult of Israel in the period between 1250 BC to 586 BC there was within Israel a group of "*YHWH aloneists*" whose first clear representative is *Hosea*. The exile only continued this "*YHWH-alone*" cause There is then enough reason to believe that at least some Pss could stem from this movement of '*YHWH-aloneism*'.

10. Cf 8, 19, 29, 33; 100, 103, 104, 111, 113-114, 117; 135-136, 145-150.

To answer these queries one must look into the matter and the manner of this group of Pss:

The main burden of these Pss is that Justice be established and right vindicated, a concern which the NT is not unaware of (Lk 18: 7-8; Rev 6:10).[11] He must be naive who thinks that long before the Gospels proclaimed the doctrines of love and of final righting of wrongs, men could not rightly feel impatient when Justice was thwarted and godly men oppressed ! This in fact is what we find in these Pss, not to speak of other OT passages. It is a passion for Justice[12] rather than mere vindictiveness that emanates from these Pss, and they are not a plea to adjusting ourselves to their situation but an invitation and a spur to attuning our ears to the Gospel.

The tone of these Pss too, ferocious, hateful, barbaric and sometimes cruel and inhuman, is disconcerting to a Christian (cf 109:12; 137:8 etc.).[13] But then this language of savagery is part of a rhetoric in which one should see rather the hyperbolic vividness of communication than crude literalism, the height of the tempo of outrage of the sufferer rather than the word for word spelling out of the penalties he intended for the enemy, spontaneous impulse of passion rather than meditated cruelty !

No doubt, passages in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5 43-47, 6 14-15, 7 1-5 etc), the teaching on "seventy times seven" forgiveness (Mt 18 · 21-23), the omission of the Isaian "day of Vengeance" (Is 61: 2) in the mission charter of Jesus (cf Lk 4·18-20) and similar passages do suggest that Jesus rejected the OT "lex talionis" But one must not close his eyes to several other passages, paradoxical though they may be, which do not fight shy in talking of "the *wrath* of the Lamb" (Rev 6 16; Rom 2 5, cf Ps 2 11, 110 5-6), "the *rod of iron*" of the Judgement of God (Rev 2 27, 12 5, 19 15, cf Ps 2 9), the *vengeance* of the Lord upon those who do not obey the Gospel (2 Thess 1 8; cf Ps 79:6), etc.

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11. In the story of the unjust judge and the widow (Lk 18 1-8) the term *ekdikeo* is used twice with reference to God in the sense of retribution since He alone could legitimately avenge justice (cf Job 19 25, Ps 94 1, Jer 15, 20: 12, Rev 6· 10). By rescuing the oppressed and punishing the wicked, God vindicates His law.

12. "Under the Old Covenant, retribution in this life was still the rule, and against this background, these appeals (for vengeance) betray simply a hunger for justice. . Purged of personal resentment, the psalms of revenge remain, for the Church and the individual Christian, an expression of that same hunger for justice in the face of forces which are ever-present in the world" *J B*, footnote d for Ps 5

13. Note that these invectives here to be judged from the deeds which provoked them: a brutal response to love (cf. 109 4), a crude reaction in pathetic weakness (137: 3-4). Notice too in this connection that the psalmists, at least some of them, present themselves as those who return good for evil (cf. 35: 12, 38: 20).

Besides, if there are passages in the NT that speak in a less crude tone (compare Is 61: 1-2 with Lk 4:18-19; Ps 82:7 with Jn 10:34; Ps34: 16 with 1 Pet 3:12), there are at the same time passages that exhibit more harshness and severity (compare Mt 7: 23 with Ps 6: 8; Rev 22:15 with Ps 5· 6 etc.)! Notice, besides, how Luke, the "scriba mansuetudinis Christi", does not hesitate to cite, with his eyes quite opened, imprecations (Ps 69· 25, 109· 8) traditionally reserved for the wicked (cf. Job 18: 17ff; Prov 14. 11), as applying to Judas (Acts 1· 20), or Paul invoking curses on hardened sinners (cf Rom 11 9 where he cites Ps 69. 22-23).

All these only show that one need not be excessively obsessed with the so-called imprecation Pss, and expressions cast out by "ferocious, self-pitying and barbaric men"![14]

Without denying the fact that these maledictions were intended to overwhelm the enemies of the psalmists as well as the wicked people, we need not read into them a blueprint for God's retribution or insinuate an idea of a private reprisal

In a time when little distinction was made between the sinner and his sins, and vindication and Justice were by most people thought to be realized this side of death, "tolerance of wrong and wrongdoers would be an implicit admission that God is not greatly interested in the affairs of this world"[15] Since the very covenant places before Israel both blessings and curses (cf Jos 8· 34), since the Psalmists adhere to a conventional terminology for depicting the inescapable fate of the godless (cf Dt 27 15-26, 28 15-68 Lev 26 14-39), and since allowance should be made for progressive revelations in the Bible itself,[16] a more tolerant verdict on them would be more in keeping with Christian love and charity We could not do better here than listen to a devout Christian and a scholar who has learned to experience God even in the cursing Pss "The psalmists set an example of moral earnestness, or righteous indignation, of burning zeal for the cause of God .. Their fundamental motive and idea is the religious passion for justice, and it was by the Holy Spirit that their writers were taught to discern and grasp this essential truth, but the form in which they clothed their desire for its realization belonged to the limitations and modes of thought of their particular age "[17]

14 C S Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms*, London, 1961, p 26
15 Anderson, *Psalms* I, p 506, Lewis, op cit, p. 31
16 For a progressive revelation with regard to love and forgiveness, cf. Gen 4 24 sevenfold punishment, Ex 21· 23ff, eye for an eye — "lex talionis", Mt 18 21ff seventy times seven forgiveness.
17 A F Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms* I, Cambridge, 1892, p. LXXV.

What then for our prayer ? *The Divine Office*[18] has done a good service by omitting some of the imprecatory Pss (58; 83; 109) in their entirety, and the imprecatory verses in a good many of them (cf. the omitted verses: 5:10; 28: 4-5; 30:17-18; 35: 4-8; 54 : 5; 55:15; 56: 7; 59:5-8.11-15; 63: 9-10 etc.). So far so good ! But there is no reason why we may not transpose these curses into affirmations of God's Judgement and denunciations against "the spiritual hosts of wickedness" which are the real enemy It depends on how you look at the reality — the bee may be for one a stinging bee, for another a honey-bee; and the Fathers were, most of them, of the later opinion. "As for the men of flesh and blood who 'live as enemies of the cross of Christ' or who make themselves our enemies, (we have) to pray not against them but for them . .As men who have injured us, they must be forgiven. But as men to follow or to cultivate — and here the Pss and the NT speak with one voice — they are to be rejected utterly, as are the principalities and powers behind them."[19]

The last point that the article deals with is eschatology in the Pss, which the author considers as bereft of hope or happiness, culminating in *Sheol*, the place of abandonment[20]

Since the publication of Dahood's monumental translation and commentary on the Pss[21] the contention of Mowinckel that "neither Israel nor early Judaism knew of a faith in any resurrection nor is such a faith represented in the Pss"[22] may not survive a serious scrutiny.

Dahood's thesis that "the psalmists gave much more thought to the problem of death and the afterlife than earlier commentators could have suspected", and his insistence that "a deep and steady belief in resurrection and immortality permeates the Psalter"[23] needs careful listening

The more than 30 texts which Dahood presents as explicitly affirming or implying a belief in immortality may not all of them be equally

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18. Printed in 1973 and in use among the Clergy and Religious in the English speaking world

19 Cf D. KIDNER, *Psalms* I, London, 1973, p. 32; LEWIS, op. cit , p. 32: "But doubtless he has for the sin of those enemies just the implacable hostility .. yet, not to the sinner but to sin It will not be tolerated nor condoned; no treaty will be made with it That tooth must come out, that right hand must be amputated, if the man is to be saved In that way the relentlessness of the psalmists is far nearer to one side of the truth than many modern attitudes which can be mistaken by those who hold them, for Christian charity . . It is nearer than the pseudo-scientific tolerance which reduces all wickedness to neurosis".

20. Cf. p 273

21. DAHOOD, *Psalms* I, II, III, AB 16 17 A B., Doubleday 1964, 1968, 1969

22. S. MOWINCKEL, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* I, Oxford, 1962, p. 240.

23. DAHOOD, *Psalms* III, pp. xli-xlvi.

convincing.[24] But his study of these texts, in the light of Northwest Semitic philology, and independently of reading back Christian ideas into the Psalter, as do others,[25] far from weakening his thesis, rather adds weight to it.

In Dahood's view several terms in Hebrew denote eternal life. The word "*hayyim*" (cf Ps 16.11[26], 21 5, 27 13,30 6, 36 10, 46 14; 69. 29; 116: 8-9, 133 3, 142. 6) is translated by him as "life eternal", meaning everlasting happiness of a life hereafter. The term "*aharit*" (37:37-38; 109.13 as also in Num 23 10, Prov 24 14 20 etc.) usually rendered as "posterity", is translated by Dahood "the future" or "future life" with eschatological overtones The *banqueting terminology* ('*Kibbed*') such as feast, preparing table, etc (cf 23 4-6, 91 15-16, 43 3-4)[27] is interpreted in terms of eternal life (cf Lk 14 16-24), since the celestial banquet forms also an essential component of the blessedness of after-life in the Canaanite tradition

Dahood may be surely correct when he reads in a number of passages which have the word '*hazah*' (*beatific vision*), the face to face meeting with God in the after-life (cf 17 15 21 7, 27 4 13, 41 12, 61 7, 63 2 140 13)[28] Further, Dahood is convinced that terms like "*nahah*" (to lead to lead into paradise) as found in Pss 5 9 23 3, 61 2,139 24 etc , "*qis*" (to awake, arise) as in Prov 6 22, Is 26 19, Ps 139 18, etc), "*laqah*" (to take, snatch) as in 49 15; 73 24 all refer to the resurrection and after-life

It is finally from Pss 103 4-5 and 119 33 112 that Dahood brings to climax his arguments for a life after death as expressed in the Pss "Redeeming life from the Pit" (103 4) is, according to Dahood, *to ransom* one from the hand of Death and bring him to Paradise[29], and not a rescue from a premature decease In the hands of Dahood, 119 112 (so also 119 33) receives a new translation Instead of the RSV "for ever, to the end" his translation of "*leolam eqeb*" as "eternal

24 DAHOOD, *Psalms* II pp xlvi-lii

25 KIRKPATRICK op cit I, p lxxvii SABOURIN I p 153

26 See KIDNER op cit p 86 "The 'path of life' leads without a break into God's presence and into eternity"

27 In 43 4 DAHOOD suggests the translation "banquet of God' for "altar of God" since usually messengers would be dispatched to conduct one to a banquet (cf Mt 22 3) rather than to the altar Referring to Ps 23 4-6, KIDNER, op cit , p 113 says that "the Christian understanding of these words does no violence to them"

28 Note KIDNER, op cit , p 90 "a variety of strong expressions in the Psalms (16 9ff, 27 4 63 2, etc) support the view that 'awake' is used here (in Ps 17 15) of resurrection" Cf Is 26 19 Dan 12 2

29 DAHOOD, *Psalms* III, p 25 cites Job 19 25 ("I know my Redeemer lives") and argues that if the term '*goel*' here deals with after-life, the same would also be true in Ps 103 4 where the same term is used KIDNER, op cit , p 365, " we should take 103 4a in its strongest sense, as resurrection to eternal life" (cf also 16 9-11, 49 7-9, etc)

will be my *reward*" (cf. 19:11; 119:33; Prov 22: 4) is also to be found in NEB: "they are a *reward* that never fails". The arguments, the translation and the interpretation by Dahood in the light of Northwest Semitic philology are really formidable and cannot be passed in silence by any serious student on the eschatology of the Psalms.

Inspite of all these affirmations on the existence of an after-life, there are also in the Pss persistent references to Sheol, a state of abandonment wrapped in silence (cf. 9:14, 26.12; 27: 5; 30:3; 31: 8; 35: 6; 40·3, 49.16, etc)[30] The most reasonable solution to this problem is the acceptance of the fact, as present-day scholarship affirms, that the Pss have been written over a long period of time by different people presenting an understanding of the problem of retribution both in this life and in the life beyond. Surely Kirkpatrick strikes a balance in his qualified assertion "Some of the expressions which appear at first sight to imply a sure hope of deliverance from Sheol and of reception into the more immediate presence of God (e g 49·15; 73 24) are used elsewhere of temporal deliverance from death or protection from danger, and may mean no more than this (9 13, 18 16, 30 3, 86· 13; 103 4; 138· 7) Reading these passages in the light of fuller revelation we may easily assign them a deeper and more precise meaning than their original authors and hearers understood They adapt themselves so readily to Christian hope that we are easily led to believe that it was there from the first"[31]

Having hopefully answered the three major contentions of the article over the "tribal nature" (¹) of the Pss, I am forced just to point out a few other dubious hypotheses of the author dispersed all through the article Since these do not touch directly the triple basic tenets of the author regarding the Pss, they are treated here only in passing. (1) The question of the disciples with regard to learning to pray (Mt 6· 9-13, Lk 11 1-4) has to be discussed separately for Mt and Lk in the context of each one's peculiar redaction, and not as an answer to the question "The Pss or some other prayer", as understood by the author of the article (cf p 270, 279) (2) In Pss 2, 45, 72 etc (cf. p. 277) which have a messianic significance the terms "rod of iron", "arrows . in the heart of king's enemies", "enemies licking the dust", etc., have to be understood in terms of eschatological judgement. Besides, see in the same Pss (esp. 45 4 6 7; 72 1-4 12-14) justice, peace, equity, mercy, righteousness, deliverance of the poor, etc , constantly referred to. (3) No one denies that Our Lord corrected the O T. concepts (cf.

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30. For Sheol cf SABOURIN, I, 149-155; T H GASTER in *Interpreter's Dict of the Bible*, I, pp 787-8, art "Dead, Abode of the Dead".
31. KIRKPATRICK, op cit, I, p lxxvii.

p. 277-278); but he also has affirmed that the OT spoke of him (cf. Lk 24:25-27.32.44-47), and that he has come "not to *abolish* but to *fulfil*" the commandments of the Law (Mt 5:17). Granting that the term "hymnesantes" may not necessarily mean "singing the psalms" (cf. p. 278-279), one may not arbitrarily affirm that Jesus, the "Singer of Psalms" (Augustine), could not have used the Pss in his prayer. There is ample reason to believe that Jesus, like any other Jew, may have sung the "pilgrim psalms" (Pss 120-134) many a time during his ascent to Sion. If he did not sing the Hallel Pss (113-118, 136) on the Last Supper evening (being the day before the Passover), are there any reasons to show that he would not have sung it at all at the previous passover festivals, this being the custom of every devout Jew ?[32] (4) Trying to understand and interpret OT in the light of fuller revelation (NT) is not eisegesis (of p. 279-280) but simply reading intently "what was there from the first", in the light of Christ (cf. Lk 24: 25-27.32.44-47). (5) Lastly, the "sin against the Holy Spirit" (cf. p. 281), would be a blind refusal to see the lines of progressive revelation, which cannot surely be attributed to true Psalm-lovers !

May I be permitted to say one last word. Scripture is a flower from which the spiders may gather poison, but bees surely only honey. May these latter be left undisturbed. Further let this not be true of us what a rabbi satirizing another said: "when so and so speaks, he says, 'Scriptures, you be silent' " !

32 SABOURIN, I, p. 176

(*Continued from p. 104*)

Church" is opposed to the hierarchical-institutional Church. Since the poor are defined as the oppressed locked in a class struggle, McCann thinks that the basic communities must be regarded as sectarian in character. While Gutiérrez seeks to maintain the idea of the Church as universal "sacrament of salvation," Luis Segundo frankly argues for the elitist character of the basic communities. His "total conscientization" results in the identification of Christian faith with what he calls the "deutero-learning process". The Gospel ideals like non-violence would not be mandatory for every age or situation.

Hence, according to McCann, Liberation Theology has to face a fateful moment of truth. It must choose between content and method. If one chooses content as Jon Sobrino did, then Liberation Theology becomes scarcely distinguishable from the progressiveness of Vatican II. If the choice is for method, Liberation Theology becomes increasingly distant from the mainstream of Catholic thought. Basic communities may end up by being recruiting centres for secular liberation movements.

McCann's critique is developed sharply and has got its own merits. It serves as a caution to Liberation Theology. But he seems to have overdrawn the conflict between what he calls the horns of the dilemma facing Liberation Theology. He does not seem to have sufficiently noticed the Gospel roots of most Liberation Theology, roots that seem to be deeper than that of the "Christian Realism" of Niebuhr.

G. LOBO, S.J.

Fr Joseph Vaz and the Image of Goan Catholics

Filomena GIESE*

Part I. The Implications of a Statement Examined

Anyone who lives in the West — or in the East today, for that matter — can vouch for the fact that the creation of "images" is a serious business. Politics and the world of business are run on the selling of images of people and products With the advent of television and world travel, religion also cannot ignore the impact of images on people's beliefs and behaviour

Now, Goan Catholics would generally not be considered of much importance ?or the future of the Church in India except for the fact that they have been given positions of responsibility in the Church since Independence But that this situation also brings the "image" of Goan Catholics into play as a factor in the efficacy of their work is largely ignored. Bede Griffiths, however, has made this connection in his book *Christian Ashram* in the following words

> The other great concentration of Catholics in India is to be found in Goa and its offshoots in Bombay and Mangalore. This Church derives from the expansion of the Portuguese Empire in the sixteenth century and it is here that the great weakness of the Church in India is to be found. The gospel was brought to India in the train of the Portuguese armies and the policy of the Portuguese was to make their converts renounce all their distinctive Indian customs (which were considered to be tainted with Hinduism) and to become Portuguese as far as possible Not only were all the forms of religion, liturgy, theology and devotional customs of a rigidly Western pattern but all the external forms, churches, statues, paintings and music, were faithful copies of Western models. It is difficult to exaggerate the effect that this has had on the Church in India The Goan Catholics are today in a sense the *élite* of the Church in India They have preserved an extremely firm faith (and in this respect it must be said that the Portuguese policy has been successful) and have a great many vocations to the priesthood and the religious life. After Kerala, the majority of the "missionary" vocations in India come from Goa and Mangalore, and what is

*Ms Filomena Giese is an Indian born in Goa now married and settled in California, U.S.A., and doing postgraduate studies in theology at the Jesuit School of Theology in the Berkeley Graduate Theological Union. Last year she published some articles on the venerable Fr Joseph Vaz in the Catholic weeklies of India.

perhaps even more important, the majority of the bishops in North India come from this Church. But with all their admirable qualities, the Goan Catholics remain cut off from the main stream of Indian culture. It must be said that in the last few years they have begun to awake to this fact and a great effort is now being made to "adapt" the Church to Indian culture which is having a considerable effect. But the consequences of the past cannot be wiped out in a day. It is this more than anything else which has made the Church in India isolated from the main stream of the Indian people and incapable of penetrating to the heart of the people. Though through the labours of St Francis Xavier and other apostles of his kind the Church was able to win converts in the first century of Portuguese rule, the number of converts, at least among the educated, has since then been negligible.[1]

Griffiths makes a very important point in this statement which I could not agree with more. That is that the image of the Church has had and does today have a great deal to do with the penetration of Christianity. And, if a highly visible group of Catholics such as the Goan Catholics has a negative image, then the work of the Church in India suffers. Obviously, Griffiths is not alone in his thinking. We are all only too familiar with the buzz-words he uses to create the stereotype of the native Christian convert as a colonial dupe or lackey, and opportunist. These include "Westernized", "relic of colonialism", "isolated from native cultures, and "elite". As he has put his thoughts down on paper it gives us the opportunity to look at the implications behind his statement and behind similar thinking.

We can only conclude from his description that if the Church is looked on as being all of the above because of the prominence of the Goan Catholics then the latter must fit into the image he paints. A fair way to proceed would be to see how these epithets fit the Goan Catholics and the Church and put the comparisons side by side. One must also evaluate *who* is responsible for what, in order to determine whether it is the Goan Catholics who are giving the negative image to the Church or not.

1. *"Relic of Colonialism"*

The Church is regarded as a "relic of colonialism" because she came to India with colonial conquerors, just as Griffiths says she did. And she did not stop just there. Right up to the Independence movements she participated with all the colonial powers in *la mission civilisatrice* or civilizing mission with which they thought they had been charged. We can hardly apply our present standards to what the Church did or did not do centuries ago, and we cannot deny the benefits

1. Bede GRIFFITHS *Christian Ashram* London, Darton, Longman & Todd, 1966, pp 57-58

of education, social mobility and social services brought by European missionaries. It is only with the growth of the study of sociology in the late nineteenth century that these benefits began to be seen as having a negative impact on native identity and culture, and the realisation arose that the institutions, education, culture and religion brought by the conquerors were themselves tools of exploitation. To the extent that the Western Churches use these today to exercise control over native populations they can be looked upon as "relics of colonialism".

Native Christians are looked on as "relics of colonialism" because they co-operated with the colonial powers and most probably accepted conversions for political and economic advantages If they were forced into conversions, they then enjoyed special privileges, according to this view.

The notion that Goan Catholics benefitted so much by co-operation with the Portuguese or British as to warrant being called "relics of colonialism" does not face up to close examination The Portuguese alternated between a policy of persecution and accomodation to the Hindus in Goa Like the British, they decided that accomodation would win the trade co-operation of the Hindu populace and this became the Portuguese official policy The Goan Catholics still today are just a step above a rural, agricultural community Where are all those benefits of political or commercial power attributed to their conversion ? If one looks at the overall Indian history, their co-operation with colonial powers fades by comparison with the co-operation given by Indian soldiers, merchants and native rulers to the British in the complete conquest of India In Goa, the Catholics were not given undue political power or advantage They joined in armed rebellions and over the centuries tried to use the political processes to achieve independence from Portugal

Were conversions forced in Goa ? The issue is muddled by the fact that the Portuguese did use force against the Hindu populace. But there were Christian martyrs, which leads one to believe that there were genuine conversions Nor did the Portuguese destroy the centuries' old economic units which would be one reason for conversion Christians and Hindus alike continued to share the administration and profits of these "communidades", so that conversion for economic reasons seems even more remote Instead of therefore emphasising an image of Goan Catholics as "relics of colonialism" by reason of conversion, we should take note of the high regard for Christianity among Hindu teachers and thinkers since the Hindu Renaissance.

This was made possible by the fact that the fear of ritual pollution by foreigners and their ideas was overcome, and that the Hindus themselves began to realise that conversions were often due to the abuses and prejudices of Brahmanism itself. Could not such a situation have existed much earlier in Goa ? After all, the very geographical position of Goa at the commercial crossroads would lend itself to a climate more open and adaptable to new ideas And religious "opportunism", which must have existed, is not confined to Christianity and to Christian converts.

The reasons for calling the Church a "relic of colonialism" are different from those for which Goan Catholics might be viewed as such. Goan Catholics are not the only or the main reason for associating the Church with colonialism

2 *"Westernized" and Isolated from the Indian Culture and People*

Unquestionably, the Goan Catholics present a very Westernized stance in India But Griffiths in no way distinguishes between secular Westernization and Westernization as applied to Church and religious practice As with co-operation with colonial powers, Westernization is not a phenomenon unique to Goan Catholics Has he forgotten the Westernized elites were created everywhere in the colonial world ? Or that the leaders of the Hindu Renaissance and of the Independence Movements arose from highly Westernized Hindu and Moslem elites ? These elites, like the Goan Catholics, accepted colonial education and culture, and lost contact with the Indian masses It took a Ramakrishna to focus on Hinduism's roots, and a Gandhi to bring politics down to the masses And Westernization is accepted up to our present day in a myriad forms

By emphasising what the Portuguese did or did not do and the effect this had on the converts they made, Griffiths glosses over the role of Church policy on liturgy, institutions, church architecture It was the Church - not the Portuguese or Goan Catholics — which determined that every one of these be "rigidly Latin and Western" as he puts it The Church soon challenged the Portuguese Padroado, or monopoly to do mission work in the Indies It was a French Papal Delegate, Cardinal de Tournon, who finally dismantled de Nobili's experiment and that of Ricci in 1703, not the Portuguese [2] By the eighteenth century when the British had consolidated their conquests and thereby strengthened the position of all colonial powers, the Church took part in the triumphalist spread of Western culture everywhere in

2 Walbert BUHLMANN, *God's Chosen People*, New York, Orbis Books, 1982, p 105.

Asia. The Jesuits, for example, were at the forefront of this Westernization movement. The only indigenous clergy anywhere in the Third World till then, the Goans, were definitely relegated to second-class status. They in no way controlled the liturgy, the institutions or the forms of education given in India under the auspices of the Church. Griffiths seems to imply wrongly that just because there are many Goan Catholic Bishops today, appointed as Independence approached, the Goan Catholics had all along some say in whether or not the Church was Westernized and Latin.

This policy of Westernization by the Church itself is well described by Sri Lankan theologian, Tissa Balasuriya, in his book *The Eucharist and Human Liberation* in these words:

> As the number of European missionaries increased and as English education spread among upper-class Christians, the accent was once more on the more Westernized practices .. During the British period a new type of priestly work was developed in which the accent was on the administration of parishes, the building up of institutions, especially of education.... The priesthood therefore became once again more acceptable to the social power structure of the country. The Catholic priest became one of the principal agents for the spread of English education . He was in no way doubted as to his political loyalties to the British Empire... The Catholic priesthood in Ceylon had thus come a long way from what it was in the time of Joseph Vaz and the Dutch persecution He was in fact considered, in British times, as some sort of ally of the social, political and economic setup of the day .. The Ceylonese native clergy also grew up in this fashion They adopted Western ways of life like other leaders of society The theology and the life-style of the priesthood was conditioned to fit in with the set-up in Europe and Westernization in the country ... In British times there was a cultural break in the tradition of the church. The accent changed from Sinhala and Tamil to English. This was in the liturgy too . The Catholic community became increasingly a part of the privileged group in Ceylon [3]

Balasuriya is here contrasting the time of the Sri Lankan Church under the Goan Oratorians with the time when these were replaced by European missionaries. The aspects of Westernization and isolation from the people well describe what the Church policy did in India and in the other colonies. The schools and educational structures in India were set up by missionaries sent by Rome and the colonial powers. They ran schools in the language of the colonial powers and largely ignored or downgraded native history, culture and traditions. What Julia Ching says in her book *Confucianism and Christianity* about the fact that "Christian missionaries were largely responsible for the

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3. Tissa Balasuriya, *The Eucharist and Human Liberation*, New York, Orbis Books, 1979, pp 107-109; Colombo, A Centre for Society and Religious Publication, 1977, pp. 91-92.

lowered prestige of Confucianism during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries"[4] applies equally to Indian culture and philosophy. This is what led to the isolation of the Church from the main stream of Indian culture. The Westernized aspect of the Goan Catholics and clergy was a direct result of Church policy, as was the *Latin liturgy and other Church structures.* To single out Goan Catholics as responsible for isolating the Church from the Indian people because they appear Westernized is like blaming European Catholics (worse still, a single group of Catholics) for the fact that they did not cross over into the Protestant camp to worship in the vernaculars with their brethren. The Westernized aspect of native Christians — not just Catholics — and native clergy is a world-wide phenomenon and not peculiar to Goan Catholics. The policies of the Churches and of Christian missionaries from Europe are mainly responsible for this fact. We have to agree with Professor Samartha's view that the Westernization of native Christians — as compared with the Westernization of non-Christians — is accentuated by the fact that they have to rely on Westernized liturgies and institutions of the Churches,[5] and not the other way around as Griffiths sees it.

Part II. Goan Catholic Religious Past — Weakness or Strength of the Church in India?

While Griffiths gives Goan Catholics credit for trying to "adapt" the Church to Indian culture, he implies that their efforts are belated and that "the consequences of the past cannot be wiped out in a day". Because his thesis is built around the idea that the Goan Catholics have made the Church in India isolated "from the main stream of the Indian people and incapable of penetrating to the heart of the people", we must assume that "the past" he is talking about is the past of the Goan Catholics. He does discuss the effects of Portuguese policy and of the Church's own evaluation of native religions and cultures as "pagan".[6] The Goan Catholics by association with the Portuguese and by unquestioning identification with the Church's views then become responsible for transmitting the negative attitudes, and hence the negative image to the Indian people of Christianity and of the Church. What is so readily assumed by Griffiths and by other popular writers on Indian Spirituality and today's Hindu-Christian dialogue, is that the Goan Catholics do *not* have a religious past independent of the Church or the Portuguese. Because they see that native Christian commu-

4. Julia CHING, *Confucianism and Christianity*, Tokyo, Kodansha International, p. 56.

5. S. J. SAMARTHA, *Courage for Dialogue*, Geneva, World Council of Churches, 1981, p. 132.

6. Bede GRIFFITHS, opus cit., pp. 58-59

nities all over the world have been passive till the present day in the adaptation of the Church to native cultures and conditions, they assume that the Goan Catholics have also been passive observers. Nothing could be further from the truth.

There are three areas in which Christians and the Church are trying to adapt Christianity to indigenous modes in the post-colonial era, namely the indigenisation of the clergy and religious, a non-colonial missionary effort, and inculturation. In discussing the steps taken by Goan Catholic Bishops and thinkers *in the past* in these areas, I will also add a fourth which is only now also being given some attention by the Church. This fourth area is the developing and recognising of native spiritual models or canonized saints

1. *Indigenisation*

The Portuguese seemed to have more readily accepted the idea of a native clergy than the Spaniards. The Jesuit College of St Paul was endowed for the education of the elite from the Indies and also for native clergy. To his great credit, Francis Xavier strongly supported this policy and wanted natives to be accepted into the Jesuit Order. He obviously worked with the help of native priests. When unable to go to the island of Mannar (off Sri Lanka) he sent an unnamed Indian priest who made many conversions and built churches there.[7] By 1643, a vigorous Goan priest, Mateus de Castro, perceived that Indians were not being taught Latin which effectively meant that they would not be ordained. He pointed out that the lack of a native clergy in places like Ormuz meant that the Church could not survive once the Portuguese were ousted [8] The Portuguese took note of this and set out to rectify matters. But the native Goan clergy had to provide their own means of support and they were not accepted by the Religious Orders (let us not blame the Portuguese for this !). The dates of their ordination were not recorded till the late eighteenth century Goan Bishops were rarely appointed and then only to places which were inaccessible to Europeans. Nonetheless, the Goan Catholics seemed to have given many vocations to the Church in this early period With the extraordinary apostolate of Fr Joseph Vaz in the seventeenth century, the true contributions of the Goan Catholic clergy became more visible. It was not till the late nineteenth century that a Papal Legate — Mgr L. Zalesky — was sent to India by Rome with the

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7 S. G. PERERA, S.J., *Historical Sketches (Ceylon Church History)*, Colombo, The Catholic Book Depot, 1962, p. 17

8. V. PERNIOLA, S.J., *The Catholic Church in Sri Lanka*. Volume I, Dehiwala, Tisara Prakasakayo Ltd., 1983, p 14.

mission of forming a native clergy.[9] Hence, it can be seen that the Goan clergy in spite of discrimination and little support from the Church or the Portuguese, persevered in the formation of a native clergy in India.

In 1684, a group of Goan Catholic priests banded together to live a community religious life. Both the late start for a native clergy and the fact that Religious Orders did not accept natives, accounts for the lack of a monastic or community tradition in India. Fr Joseph Vaz joined this band of priests in 1685 and organised them into the Oratorian Order with the help of the Portuguese Oratorians. This Order was to serve the Catholics of Kanara and Sri Lanka for 140 years, and in the last years of its existence also sent priests to Africa. Here then, you have Goan Catholics involved in indigenising the religious life far ahead of what the Church, the Religious Orders and other native Christian communities did anywhere else.

Finally, the matter of *who* was to be permitted to be ordained a priest in India has to be seen from the historical perspective. The Third and especially the Fifth Councils of Goa ruled that the lowest castes should not be permitted to enter the priesthood.[10] The reason given was that this would reflect poorly on the priestly ministry. The policy that de Nobili would have followed was that a Brahmin priesthood should be established, in order to accomodate the Brahmin caste.[11] Had he been successful in establishing a Brahmin seminary, this would have been a step backward for Indian Catholics. Fr Vaz, on the other hand, educated his servant (of the Kunbi caste) in Latin and Portuguese and sent him back to Goa to be ordained a priest with a letter of high recommendation, pointing out that there was no canonical reason for not ordaining him.[12] Today, we can see that the Church should have followed a policy of full indigenisation and full equality in the matter of indigenous clergy and religious such as was envisioned and implemented by Fr Vaz.

2. *Non-Colonial Missionary Effort*

It is only since the independence of Third World countries that non-colonial missionary work can be said to have begun. The fact

9 Mgr L. ZALESKY, Papal Nuncio to India (1892-1916) and founder of the Papal Seminary of Kandy, now Pune, wrote a book on Fr Vaz called *The Apostle of Ceylon*, London, 1913. He discovered the great devotion to Fr Vaz among Sri Lankan families and held him up as *the* model for the native clergy he had been sent to found.

10 Vincent CRONIN, *A Pearl To India*, New York, E.P. Dutton & Co Inc., 1959, p. 168.

11. Ibid., p. 167.

12 M. Da Costa NUNES, *Documentacao Para A Historia Da Congregacao Do Oratorio De Santa Cruz Dos Milagres Do Clero Natural De Goa*, Lisboa, Centro De Estudos Historicos Ultramarinos, 1966, p. 63.

that the work of the Church was closely connected with colonial conquest and that missionaries worked with the support of colonial patronage or protection has made the Church appear to be a "relic of colonialism". In India, it was the Goan Mateus de Castro who founded a mission outside Portuguese colonial influence and power in Bicholim.[13] He aligned himself with Rome and the Propaganda Fide which wanted to break away from the Padroado or Portuguese monopoly to do missionary work in the Indies. For his courage in defying the Portuguese and working in an area which was under Maratha control as early as the middle of the sixteenth century, Rome appointed him Bishop. He was later made a member of the Curia, the first native of the Third World to gain such an appointment in Rome In the seventeenth century when the Naik of Bednur would not accept European missionaries, Rome again appointed a Goan Bishop, Thomas de Castro, to found a mission in Mangalore[14] He worked successfully with the Naik and the local queen. Fr Joseph Vaz was sent by the Chapter of Goa to Mangalore to revive the Portuguese Mission at the same time. Realising that the Portuguese could not do mission work in this area of declining Portuguese power, he made peace with the Bishop appointed by Rome This action angered his Portuguese Archbishop who was prevented from recalling him only by the intervention of a leading Jesuit. Thus, we have very early in Goan Catholic history, Bishops and leaders who did not simply go along with Portuguese policy in the matter of missionary policy.

But if one were to look for a complete non-colonial missionary endeavour, independent of either Portugal or Rome. then one has to turn to the secret journey of Fr Vaz to Sri Lanka in 1687 to re-found the Church there and to make new converts Without men, arms or political or Church patronage, he went to minister to the abandoned Catholics of Sri Lanka who were under presecusion by the Dutch. He lived our post-colonial experience in Sri Lanka as a missionary, living as a loyal subject of a native Buddhist ruler who offered him some protection from the Dutch and from the hostility of his own monks and nobles He meticulously avoided political ties with Portugal and as he was persecuted by a colonial power, the Dutch, and used native Goan priests, his work is truly non-colonial For 140 years thereafter, his Goan Oratorian priests went to Sri Lanka to work with the Sri Lankan Catholics who were entirely dependent on them — not Rome — for spiritual and missionary service Nowhere else does one find native missionaries like the Goan Catholics who went so early to diffi-

13 Pe. Sebastiao DO REGO, *Vida Do Veneravel Padre Jose Vaz*, 3rd ed., Goa, Imprensa Nacional de Goa, 1962, p 37.
14. Ibid., p. 36.

cult places which were inaccessible to Rome. And nowhere else is there a case in which one native community is to depend *entirely* on *another native community* for priests and ministry, and for such a long period at that. Thus it can be said that the Goan Catholics have been in the forefront of founding truly indigenous and non-colonial Churches as in Bicholim, Mangalore and Sri Lanka.

3. *Inculturation*

When it comes to the question of the past or present efforts of inculturation, I find in my readings of Merton, Panikkar, Griffiths, Buhlman and other writers on Indian Christianity not a single mention of the work done by Fr Vaz and his disciples in Sri Lanka. The same can be said for the topic of sannyasa In 1957 Abhishiktananda was asked by the Archbishop of Nagpur to write a memorandum on Christian sannyasis -- he lists De Nobili, Britto and Beschi [15] Neither this Bishop nor he thought of looking for possible models of inculturation and sannyasa in the Goan Catholic past Thus, all these above writers list the experiments of de Nobili, John de Britto, Ricci and other Jesuits and leave out the *longest lasting* and *only* successful experiment in inculturation launched by Fr Vaz in Sri Lanka Yet, Joseph Vaz was a contemporary of John de Britto and was invited by him to work in Madurai [16] Vaz was to go to Sri Lanka instead, where he used inculturation as the very cornerstone of his missionary policy

Fr Vaz and his priests lived in the mode of the people, even dressing like them He also followed the religious life-style of the Buddhist monks and asked his priests to do the same He and his priests used the native languages He studied Pali and Sanskrit and studied the Scriptures of Sri Lanka Prayers and meditation tracts were composed by him in Kanarese, Tamil and Sinhala He encouraged his brilliant disciple, Jacome Goncalves, to continue this work Goncalves wrote some 40 doctrinal and theological tracts in Tamil and Sinhala in the highest literary style He composed Prayers and Hymns and Passion Plays which are used to the present day For his contribution to the Sinhala language I am told that his name is mentioned in nearly every Sinhala dictionary For 140 years, the Sinhala Catholics were nurtured by these works and the native para-liturgy left for them by their Goan priests As Balasuriya has pointed out, the whole accent of the Church in Sri Lanka changed from native to Western when the

15 X Irudayaraj, S J "Sanyasa – Swami Abhishiktananda". The Clergy Monthly 38 (December 1974), pp 502-503

16 Agr P Correia Afonso, "Sao Joao de Brito e Padre Jose Vaz", *Souvenir do Tricentenario do Ven Pe Jose Vaz*, 1651-1951, April 1951, Goa, Tipografia Borcar, 1951, p. 26.

Goan Oratorians were replaced by the European missionaries sent by Rome. It is known that Fr Vaz set up schools in Kanara and that he and his priests attended to the education of the Catholics of Sri Lanka who were discriminated against by the Dutch on religious grounds. These schools used the vernacular, not the colonial languages. These are not actions, then, of Goan Catholics who shunned or rejected native cultures and languages. In fact, there are letters of the period from the King of Portugal downwards which praise the efficacy of Goan Catholic priests in the making of converts just because they were similar to the Indians and Sri Lankans they worked among in customs and languages. And if one is going to use the percentage of converts as a yardstick for efficacy of missionary work as Griffiths does, let us not forget that the Sri Lankan Catholics today represent a healthy 10% of the population of a strongly Buddhist country — not the less than 2% in India and elsewhere They tell me in Sri Lanka that these are very largely the descendants of the converts made by Fr Vaz and his Goan Oratorian priests Here in Sri Lanka then the Goan Catholic priests were free from the policies of colonial powers and relatively free from official Church policy on Westernization and promoting the culture and languages of the colonial powers Therefore, this is a true glimpse of what the Goan Catholic clergy might have done in India — had they been freer also – for a truly non-Westernized, fully indigenous, non-colonial Church which would also be fully inculturated, *centuries ahead* of Vatican II.

In the light of these facts about what Goan Catholic priests did in Kanara and Sri Lanka for inculturation, it is ironic indeed that Griffiths singles Goan Catholics as being responsible in the main for the colonial, Westernized and culturally isolated Church in India which he has encountered

4 *Native Models of Christian Spiritual Perfection*

To read any or all of the books on Hindu-Christian dialogue, models of Indian Christian spirituality and history, is to come away with the sense that the native Christians have achieved next to nothing spiritually in the last five centuries The Church also has been unusually silent on the matter of Indian Catholic saints. The Martyrs of Sancoale and Cuncolim have not yet been recognised I have been told by a Jesuit priest that he has heard Jesuit Fr Heras say during a lecture that the names of the Goan laity who were martyred at Cuncolim were actually dropped when the Jesuits martyred there were beatified. Thus the Goan Catholics may have the singular distinction of having a *minus* beatification ! If the Goan Catholics or other Indian Catholics are

to have any sort of a positive image at all, it cannot come about by appointing Bishops and Committees. These do not impress the non-Catholic. He is only interested in authentic spiritual experience and perfection. This can only be seen from the lives of native saints which transcend anything that theology and philosophy can say to him.

Now, if there is anything which shows the Indian man and woman in the street that the Church is foreign and imported, it must surely be the fact that Catholic churches, schools, hospitals and institutions everywhere in India are dedicated to foreign, imported saints and founders of foreign Religious Orders which sponsor them. For all that the Church has been on the Indian sub-continent for five centuries, there is still not a single, *fully* Indian, beatified or canonized saint! What this clearly says to the non-Christian, and even the Christian, is that the Christian path does not lead to the highest spiritual fulfilment. Indeed, to read modern writers on East-West dialogue is to confirm this and to give the impression that the Eastern paths work better. There are two types of spiritual models held up to Indians, the Western or the non-Christian. Almost nothing is said of the achievements of Indian nuns, priests and laity doing selfless, humanitarian and social work in India. And Christian writers like Griffiths write *only* of St Benedict or Sri Ramakarishna and Sri Ramana and their mystical and contemplative experiences, ignoring entirely the fact that Indians like Fr Vaz and his disciple, Fr Pedro Ferrao, rose from their trances to tend to the abandoned, to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, heal the sick and educate and uplift the socially oppressed, and in as much an Indian as a Christian way. For Goan Catholics who already have some tradition of contemplation and action in their past, it seems strange to be exhorted to learn from the non-Christians who are today visible successes, and not the other way around also. The result can only by called a *monologue*, not a *dialogue*!

Conclusions

Goan Catholics, like all other native Christians, have been thrust into a period of change and adjustment since the Independence movements for which neither the colonial powers nor the Church had prepared them. It cannot help their task and the cause of Christianity in countries like India to have prominent writers and lecturers shift the responsibility — albeit subtly — of the rigidly Latin, Westernized, foreign, imported and culturally isolated Church on to them, rather than to the policies of the Church itself where it rightly belongs. Such statements which reinforce the most conservative and reactionary opinions of native Christians as allies of colonial powers and as totally

alienated from the Indian people and culture must be countered with historical facts. The movement for Indianization led by Monchanin, Le Saux and now Griffiths represents Westerners working from *their* love of India, of Hinduism, and from *their* being Indologists.[17] In the post-Independence climate, the achievements of Indian Catholics have also to be brought to the forefront if adaptation is to be more than making Christianity palatable.

As has been seen, the Goan Catholics have in their own past, authentic native Indian roots for a non-Westernized, non-colonial Church, which fully respects native languages and cultures, with elements of contemplation and renunciation — everything, in short, that the Indian Church is trying to do to adapt itself to India today. Yet, while Church leaders tirelessly hold up Western saints as spiritual models for Indians from Xavier to Francis of Assisi, as well as uncanonized figures whose lives have touched India like De Nobili and Mother Teresa, the fact that "the Church in India has produced one who can certainly rank with the greatest apostles in history"[18] is kept hidden from the Indian people Archbishop Raymond's comment on this phenomenon, a generation ago, was this

> The tragedy is that Fr Vaz is too little known This is partly a defect of attitude· we are prepared to admire, praise and worship the saint from abroad, but we are reluctant to believe that our country can produce men of similar mould Apparently, patriotism is at a discount here In the new India, there must obviously be a change· the Indian Church is faced with a gigantic missionary task, which she must be conscious of and must have the courage and resolution to grapple with, and Fr Vaz, the greatest missionary that India has produced, is just the figure to arouse us to a sense of our responsibilities and to provide the stimulus and the strength to face them[19]

But is this blind attitude to the achievements of native Catholics not due to Church leaders and religious educators who have failed to teach Indian Catholics that Indian apostles worked even alongside Xavier, and thereafter ?

And what about Goan Catholics ? Are they to limp along with a condescending pat on the back for '.firm faith" and numerous vocations, to be held up to public scrutiny as nothing more than examples of what the Church *should not have done* ? Who, if not Church leaders

17 Fr P. S. Sinha, "Exchange of Views". The Clergy Monthly Supplement, March 1957, p. 205. "The good foreign missionaries (..anxious to repair the damage of their error in the past) are now playing the role of teachers of our culture..."

18. Archbishop Raymond, Foreword to *A Saint For The New India — Fr Josep hVaz, Apostle of Kanara and Ceylon* by Fr Charles Gasbarri, Allahabad, St Paul's Publications, 1961, p. 7.

19. Ibid., pp 7-8.

and writers on Indian Christian spirituality can possibly counteract their negative image as having been part and parcel of the religious colonialism? It would not be too strong a statement to say that public words and deeds on some of the outstanding contributions of the Goan Catholic past is owed to the Goan Catholics. It is time that the Indian people were told that they have contributed a great deal for Indianization of the Church and for non-colonial missionary work, notwithstanding difficult situations and the Westernizing influences of colonial politics and religion.

The Idols of Death and the God of Life: A Theology. By Pablo RICHARD *et alii*. Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books. 1983 Pp viii-212 $ 12.95

The book is a collection of articles written by different authors. All are dealing with the question of God in Latin America. As the title of the book suggests, the articles communicate that the true God is the One Who gives life and an idol is that which leads to death. The central problem of Latin America today is one of oppression. One human being oppressing another human being! That is the greatest sin. Latin America is faced with the problem of idolatry rather than atheism. They have created false gods out of the system of oppression. All systems of oppression are characterized by the creation of gods and idols that sanction oppression and anti-life forces' (p. 1)

One of the articles I found most enlightening is "The Epiphany of the God of life in Jesus of Nazareth" by Jon Sobrino. The author stresses the fact that the Jews did not swear by the "true" God but rather by the "living" God. If a living human being is the glory of God, then a dying human being is the denial of God. Hence there is a profound correlation between God and life. The religious dimension is not something extra added to life but life itself is the essence of what is religious. All the religious laws must defend and promote life, if they have to be religious at all. Jesus had to insist "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath "(Mk 2.27). "Jesus claims that the rights of God cannot be in contradiction to the rights of humans when these rights are what foster human life" (p. 81)

Life, in all its fulness, including its materiality, is Jesus' first concern. He believed that there must be "bread" as a symbol of life, for everyone. Bread and food are the primary concerns of Jesus. The bread of life and earthly bread are not opposed to each other. In the Lord's prayer, the petition for bread occupies an important place. Jesus eats with Publicans, eats without washing. Washing hands is a human institution, while sharing food is a divine institution. By sharing the food, we encounter both man and the Son of man.

Jesus came to give life in its fulness. Hence witnessing to Jesus means witnessing to life. Witnessing on behalf of life should be the primary concern of the Church today. Now we see that life is being threatened. It would be illusory, useless and blasphemous to claim to bear witness to God without engaging in continual fight against structural injustice and institutional violence. "If doing injustice reveals itself as the worship of false gods, then the practice of justice is seen to be worship of the true God" (p. 74)

In this review, I have touched upon only one article. I have found the articles of Richard, Croatto, Pixley and Limon very useful. All of them deal with the problem of the God of life confronting the situation of oppression and injustice. The authors prove their point by relevant recourse to the Scripture and the Christian tradition. Since the articles in this book are highly theological in nature, priests, religious and those having some theological background will be able to draw more fruit out of them. I recommend this book to those actively involved in the struggle against poverty, inequality, injustice and oppression.

JOSE THAYIL, S.J.

Forum

Spirituality for a School

The annual prize distribution day was impressive by all standards. The School Management showed its class. The number of parents present, the stacks of certificates picked up with quiet efficiency and duly awarded to the beaming faces of the privileged, the staccato repetition of hardwork, discipline, proficiency in subjects, truly spoke of an all-round success. At the end, the Principal arose to give the year's report on the School Again there was rhythm and finesse, as she spelt out the theme of the School, the values inculcated, the teaching standards and the high percentage at the SSC examinations. The school was noted for honesty, discipline, responsibility, the number of vocations and the commendable dedication of staff and pupils.

There was a general air of satisfaction and of achievement. Parents felt that they had made the right decision in the choice of a school, so thorough, so elite and, of course, so successful The entertainment that followed received due applause

Sitting amongst the invited guests, I got into a mood of reflection that took me away from the event What was the *raison d'être* of the whole show-biz ? A motivation exercise ? An act of elitism ? What, if any, is the spirituality of a school manifested in this evening's act ? Could the values so boldly proclaimed with dogmatic certitude be isolated from the reality of life ? What about the rituals of First Fridays and "regular confessions"? Must they be de-emphasized ? The Christian stamp — what does it turn out to be ? My mind became a whirl of conflicting thoughts

The principal's report echoed with the school's efforts in value education The School's story spoke of the attitudes and values which the students will profess, stand by, and live in the future married life and the building of the nation Values can never be lived or acted upon in a vacuum, nor are they neutral They get tied down to and are mixed up with systems, situations, structures and modes of production They are even embodied in a person who has power. Khomeini is a good example. So when you claim to be honest in life, that honesty can be twisted into the sincerity and loyalty of an Eichmann When you declare that you are responsible, the colour that this value takes on can be that of a responsibility to the dictates of a multi-national whose sole aim is the enormous gains of the inner circle. And when you are convinced that you are just, your judgement might be tinged by a favour or a promotion or money that has been promised to you. Values, even if Christian, are exercised in a consumer world, a milieu of status, profit economy, power, political manipulation and

cultural domination. Values can therefore get pretty muddled up, especially when counter-values are prevalent and thrust upon us by other powers.

We might well inquire as to why the values taught in school cannot be absolute ? Most people define progress today within the parameters of Western development and ways of thinking. The child is unconsciously given a model to strive for, one that is already set out by the parents, their employment and production environments. Production goes by Western standards Technology is researched by a scientific body that goes to fill the money bags of concerns totally alien to the cultures and aspirations of Third World countries. Consumerism and market reactions determine the values and trends of today, and therefore, our life-style too. The school is not an island or a fortress isolated or resistant to the guiles of these all prevading cultural systems. Education, as a meaning system, will take its shape and directions according to these dictates. We will have brave statements made in school reports, great efforts attempted during the year and we will go on to imagine that we are producing truthful, responsible and disciplined students A Prize Distribution, such as the one I witnessed, will be an exercise in futility with a mistaken sense of achievement. In today's world, action is the magic word and the result demanded is success, status and profit These form the new set of values, the motivation to act and live And, by Jove, you and I *are* caught up in this rat race.

This "spirituality" of our schools, for long the conscious or unconscious trend in our academies, must be questioned, if our alumni are going to give any Christian witness Ethical declarations or public outcries at the loss of values in society are ineffective for change; a sop for our conscience and so-called social obligations The summons to a Christian witness must be fleshed out in forms of teaching and character formation that become a praxis of committed love for change. Now a restless, angry mood got the better of me There *must* be a spirituality offered and practised in our schools that would make them a light in the city and the world A motivation for our children that would lead to a programme that would be an active ferment amongst people. Could one describe it as an "angry spirituality"?

However, I first need to explain my idea of spirituality as the life of the spirit in us that changes, recasts and renews the order of things To me spirituality is basically a relationship to people, to events, and situations and to world history It is a world vision I have that tends to become concrete reality through my actions It has its repercussions on my life-style, culture and my own mode of education and self-development This happens not because I am the centre or cause of it all, but because I have an ontological relationship to the Absolute, the Divine, to God. This God is not passive, but the God of history, motivating me in his own acts among his people. This God was revealed in Jesus and his own action towards a new Humanity, a new Creation, a new Reality. This relationship totally conditions all other relationships to persons, to the cosmos, and my life-style, and is herefore the spiritual life in me.

What has the Christ of faith to tell our schools that for many reasons are in such demand, that are praised by all, and are playing some role in the development of the country ? He first of all tells us of a Father who was involved and wants us to be involved with *his* people. Not just a people, but anyone and everyone. He is the Father of a vast majority of people, the more than 80% of the world's population who are poor, weak, oppressed and exploited. A Father who in his Son Jesus took sides. He made an option for justice for the dispossessed and, in clear words and actions, lived in solidarity with and commitment to the weak. In our present historical moment and situation, lack of commitment to the weak signifies a positive acceptance of the values of a system that lays stress on private ownership, the profit mentality, and wealth for a few — the capitalistic system. It is a reinforcement and entrenchment of the mechanisms of a system that in ways covert and overt oppresses the millions of marginalised people

A spirituality for our schools should mean taking sides by gearing the academic world to social action in favour of the poor and the weak. Evidently, this cannot be achieved without an analytical process and without paying attention to a reality that is social, political, economic and religious A total exposure to this reality, from kindergarten to standard tenth, is imperative. Against such a demand one might argue that this is not the only reality with which students must be confronted. However every one will surely agree that the drama of life in today's world is taking place in precisely these spheres and structures.

Coming back to the Jesus of history, the Gospels are replete with statements and actions of his that made an impact on the social, political and economic fields of the times We can certainly say that because they were biased in favour of the weak, the death of Jesus that resulted from them was an act against power-structures, and therefore political in the right sense of the word. Our schools, like Christ, will have to speak out and act for those he loved and died for. This is to be done through interventions by the school as a whole, as well as through the teaching of such subjects as religious instruction, history, literature and civics. Nothing must be neutral The powers of this world are not neutral and neither can the educational system that forms our citizens afford to sit on the fence

As a consequence, our spirituality cannot be naive, or merely devotional and ritualistic. It must be analytical and critical, constantly asking questions about justice and injustice. The solutions we seek and work for must not be grounded solely on our "heavenly destiny"; they must be situated firmly in the social and material realities of our Third World. Our spirituality will be dialectical because it will stress the motives of the people's struggle (to aspire is to struggle). It will therefore be conflictive Such a spirituality offered to our students will include the possibility of actions that create tensions. Jesus' life and actions created tensions. Above all, this spirituality will lead to a process of liberation, not just for the individual but also for the weak and oppressed. This spirituality will stress human rights. The kingdom of God demands that every man, woman and child is respected,

'dignified'. A spirituality for our schools is not so much the imparting of absolute values as a struggle in hope through thought, speech and action for the dignity of Man.

Theologically speaking, it is the Resurrection that gives us this insight and hope. The student will realize that there is a triumph of life over oppression and destruction, despite the obstacles and conflicts of history. The complete freedom of God's reign on earth is the final goal of our spirituality and the school is, in God's design, a potent instrument in the process.

Diocesan Pastoral Centre,
Bombay

Fr Raymond D'Silva

Luther in Mid-Career. By Heinrich Bornkamm Edited and with a Foreword by Karin Bornkamm Translated by F Theodore Bachmann *London, Darton Longman & Todd*, 1983 Pp xx-709 Price £ 25 00

One more book about Luther, whose life and deeds, writings and utterances have already been covered by hundreds of books and thousands of articles No doubt, it is a thick book, though the German original would have been still longer had the author not died in 1977 Though the value of a book is not judged by the number of pages in this case it is so to a large extent For indeed it is a very detailed study of Luther's thought, activities and writings from 1521, the Wartburg, down to 1530, the Augsburg Diet (German Parliament) and the first official confession or declaration of tenets which bears the name of the same city

Those nine years were bursting with life in every field, at every level The reformation launched by Martin Luther, a pious and ardent Augustinian friar, was developing as a movement out of the old Church, the Catholic Church, and assuming its own characteristics Such a large scale movement, essentially religious in ethos, could not but have revolutionary consequences for society, state, and even economics. It is obvious that Luther could not foresee everything

In December 1521 the Friar Martin still wanted to remain an Augustinian Within a few years, however, the impact of his teaching and personality was felt in his own order in Germany, and also elsewhere in North Europe Another religious order, the most important medieval knighthood in German lands, the Teutonic Order, in the main passed over to Luther's side. It explains why in particular Eastern Prussia became Lutheran, including its own bishops These were probably the first prelates to join the movement

The author's treatment conforms by and large to the best and critical scholarship of our times Some may find that he is, as a devout Lutheran, too sympathetic to the hero he describes so well Be this as it may he succeeds in making Luther alive again After all the best quality of a biographer consists in sympathising with the person he wants to analyse

As known to all Luther's students, almost all the documentary evidence, including his own writings, has been published in the many volumes of the Weimar edition since 1883 Most of them were published in an English translation in the U S A since 1955. Not only the author made full use of this enormous material, but also of many other published and unpublished sources of the same period, such as, for instance, the many letters of friends and foes of the reformer These letters are often quite revealing of the spirit of a time exuding humanistic and reformatory ideals

This is not a small merit from the part of the late Dr Bornkamm to have succeeded in synthetizing so much material, controlling it and constantly referring to it The last ten pages of the book are very useful to the discerning reader since they provide a list of Luther's writings set in chronological order.

E R Hambye, S.J.

Correspondence

Psalms Outdated ?

Dear Editor,

I would like to respond briefly to Fr Subhash Anand's article, "The Psalms: Another View" (VIDYAJYOTI, June-July, 1984, pp. 270f). I found this article very painful reading It brought home to me forcibly how the lack of a serious study of the whole Bible, especially on the part of theologians, can be so ruinous to interpretation Kindly excuse my sounding a personal note, since the personal here happens to be scripturally and theologically relevant. Fr Subhash is a respected Catholic theologian who is an expert in Indian Scriptures. In the last paragraph of his article, he recommends the inclusion of select writings from other religious traditions in the prayer of the Church I am very sympathetic to this suggestion

But there is something here which I fail to understand S. can say very quietly "I must also confess that I have not been a very keen student of the Old Testament." He finds an advantage here: "Thus I am more close to the average Catholic" But are an imperfect knowledge of the OT and greater closeness to the average Catholic a qualification for a responsible interpretation of the Psalms ?

Interpretation of any portions of the Bible is not possible without a vision of the whole, since the Bible, the Word of God, is meant to be a unity in spite of its evident diversity And, if one is not competent to interpret, how could one act as a guide for others ? According to the Vatican II document on Divine Revelation, cited by S, "the study of the sacred page should be the very soul of sacred theology . All priests of Christ should immerse themselves in the Scriptures by constant sacred reading and diligent study" (nn. 24-25). They ought to be sharing the boundless riches of the divine Word with the faithful committed to their care But obviously one cannot share what one doesn't have.

S speaks like a perfect outsider of the OT He is allergic to the majority of the Psalms because he is allergic to the OT In this case no interpretation is possible Interpretation requires insertion into the biblical thought-world, and personal familiarity with the Hebrew ways of thinking and speaking There is no short-cut to such competence One is invited to assimilate the inspired words "Son of man, eat what is offered to you; eat this scroll and then speak " (Ez 3 1) Peter reminds us that the Scriptures are not "a matter of one's own interpretation" (2 Pet 1.20). What is written through the Holy Spirit must be understood through the Spirit and through careful study before it can be interpreted Paul tells us that "all Scripture, being inspired by God, is profitable for teaching, for *reproof* " (2 Tim 3:16) S uses the Psalms in order to *reprove* the psalmists ! He finds them spiritually backward, repulsive because self-righteous, ethically inferior, culturally narrow and bigoted. I wonder whether average Catholics would thus quietly sit in judgment on the sacred authors. In reality it is these holy authors who judge us (see Lk 22:30).

S cites a detached phrase from J L. McKenzie (p. 271) to suggest that he does not think highly of the monotheism of even the prophets, while the rest of the OT is far inferior to the prophets What the author of *The Two-Edged Sword* thinks of the OT is so vastly different from S.'s view. In a masterly article, "The Significance of the Old Testament for Christian Faith in Roman Catholicism" (in *The Old Testament and Christian Faith*, ed by B. W. Anderson, 1969) McK. has the following:

"It is the history of Israel that isolates Jesus Christ from any figures in the ancient and modern world ... from all culture-heroes, king-saviours,

cosmic men and mythological bearers of life. Yahweh of the Old Testament is a saving God and besides him there is no other. The personal reality of God breaks through in the OT with convincing immediacy. Jesus could speak of him as the Father with no further comment... I have chosen to emphasize the OT as a means of understanding Jesus Christ because I have seen this emphasis less frequently stated, and because I believe it is an important part of the significance of the OT for Christian faith...

"When the Christian meets elements of the OT which seem to lack significance, should he not ask himself whether the significance has escaped him? And if it has escaped him, is it perhaps because *he has not grasped the totality of the Old and New Testament*, and sees details as insignificant because he does not put them in broad perspective? If the Christian can and ought to identify himself with the fulness of Israel, which is Jesus living in the Church, he also ought to identify himself with Israel under judgment, for the Christian is redeemed in principle rather than in achievement. If he does not recognise himself in historical Israel, he is living a life of remarkable self-deception."

It is clear that, unlike S., McK. does not think in terms of two discontinuous stages of salvation history nor will he join S. in making fun of the "tribal god" of the OT.

The historical Jesus Christ was "born of woman, born under the Law." He was deeply rooted in space and time, in a historical culture and faith from which he cannot be divorced without his being made into a dubious construction supposedly more adapted to contemporary needs. The group that Jesus trained and formed was entirely Jewish. The primitive Church that preached him was entirely Jewish. They cited the OT to show the meaning of his person and mission. They proclaimed him as the answer to questions and the solution to problems which are presented only in the OT. Consequently the language, the religious terminology and the world-view presupposed in the NT are those of the OT. Are we then to be patronizing and hyper-critical towards the religious legacy of the people who initiated the most powerful religious movement in recorded human history?

Writes Julio De Santa Ana: "The God of the OT is the God of the poor and the oppressed, the one who heard the cry of the enslaved people of Israel, who liberated them from Egypt, who sustained them in exodus and in exile, and who continued to act in history to establish justice and righteousness. He is the one who gave laws of justice, raised kings to administer justice, and prophets to condemn injustice. The God of the NT is the same God' (*Towards a Church of the Poor* 1979 pp. xxif)

A most valuable aspect of the OT is its conviction of the reality and the malice of sin and of our powerlessness to redeem ourselves from sin. It is in the history of God's encounter with Israel that he has revealed to us the depth of our wickedness and enabled us to recognise it. McK. thinks that this aspect of human existence cannot be learned well and existentially apart from the OT, whose drama achieves a reality and an urgency which are foreign to philosophy. Curiously it is the fact of the psalmists being fully caught up in the mortal struggle between good and evil in our world, and their resisting the powers of evil with all their might, that has scandalized S. most. He consistently misses the point of all the Psalms belonging in this class. For instance, Ps 18 41 does not refer to "non Israelites" (p. 271), but to the psalmist's Israelite "enemies".

Most of S.'s difficulties relate to the psalmist's attitude towards their enemies. He sees this attitude in terms of narrowness, hatred, intolerance and bigotry. Here I must refer the reader to my article, "Attitude to Enemies in the Psalms" in *Biblebhashyam*, 1982, pp. 104ff. Modern theology pays close attention to the oppressed-oppressor conflict in our world, which is recognised as very real and most serious. Are the oppressed failing in Christian love when they act against their oppressors, or when they appeal to God against them? A certain easy-going pacifism, evident in Church-circles, has no relation to the hard facts of our world.

In my article I cite two scholars. "Our scandal and surprise stem most of the time from our inability to fathom the depths of human feelings (e.g. Ps

137, my insertion) as well as from our ignorance of biblical and oriental traditions" (K. Luke, *Israel Before Yahweh*, 175). In a review of Luke's book Fr L. Legrand agrees with him, and comments: "A certain supercilious attitude towards the Old Testament in the name of 'Christian love' is in fact pseudo-Christian: it is just a continuation of the disastrous anaemic sentimentalism that does not want to look beyond the pallid range of experience of bourgeois decency, and refuses to look squarely at a world ruled by violence, strife, injustice, anguish. All the talk about 'international theology' is empty verbiage if it refuses to cast its roots in the dirty soil of the incarnation. No genuine mysticism and 'God-experience' can bypass those earthly realities teeming in the Psalter" (*Indian Theological Studies*, 1979, p. 349).

My article points out that our difficulty with the "cursing passages" arises largely from the fact that we fail to understand clearly the context and the presuppositions of these passages. Both the psalmists' way of thinking on this subject of "enemies" and their way of speaking create problems for us when we are not sufficiently familiar with the Bible as a whole. After examining the problem my article arrives at the following conclusion "We are quite mistaken when we think of the psalmists as people who fall short of the Christian perfection of love of enemies We fail to see that it is their great love of God and people and their deep social concern that makes them fight against those who ally themselves with the powers of darkness The psalmists ought to have a powerful appeal for all those many social workers who are today engaged in a deadly fight against the sinister powers of oppression and exploitation. Perceptive readers will penetrate through the web of imperfect human words to the lucid mind and intention of the psalmists who mean no harm to anyone, but appeal confidently and desperately and uninhibitedly to the heart of their Maker on behalf of all the suffering faithful against the designs of the unfaithful. Deep calls to deep (Ps 42 7)"

S speaks sweetly about the God of Jesus and about the Christian being called to love even his enemies But he says nothing about the Jesus who also says "I never knew you depart from me, you evil-doers (cf Ps 139 22, S p 275) The sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness , Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, blind guides Depart from me· you cursed I will spew you out of my mouth" The picture of Jesus is not complete without the Book of Revelation where Jesus, the Faithful and True, is seen "clad in a robe dipped in blood" "From his mouth issues a sharp sword with which to smite the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron (cf Ps 2 9, S p 277), he will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty" (20 15) Paul who claimed to "have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor 2·16) could say to his opponent "You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy God shall strike you, you white-washed wall ! " (Acts 13 10, 23 3) Are we to be surprised if a few teeth are broken when God strikes ? (cf Ps 3 7, S p 274)

Since I am far from sharing the difficulties experienced by S in regard to the Psalms, I still hold my view that the Psalms are the privileged school where Jesus is always present to teach us how to pray That the Psalms are Scripture means that they are the word of God, the word of Christ, which is necessarily a word of *teaching* (see 2 Tim 3 16) And what does Jesus teach us through a book of inspired *prayers* except how to pray ? S. is so obsessed with the mostly imagined limitations and defects of the psalmists that he is unable to appreciate their wonderful qualities — their profound faith, their awe of God, Creator and Father, their deep wonder at God's sovereign power and rule, their conviction about God's concern for the oppressed and his wrath for the oppressor, their spirit of constant praise and thanksgiving and joy in God, their God-given wisdom, their nature-mysticism, their invincible hope, their love embracing all peoples (see Ps 100 etc.), their deep concern for the welfare of the community, their acceptance of the cross, their admirable courage in the face of extreme suffering, their strong hatred of evil, struggle for justice, etc. Today Christ speaks to all open-minded believers through the heart-felt prayers of these holy men — through each Psalm — in order to train us in the art of personal and communitarian prayer Interpreting the Psalms through one's self-commitment to Christ does not mean *eisegesis*, because they are meant to be so interpreted.

The fact that the disciples of Jesus were without the gift of prayer during Jesus' ministry in spite of their being familiar with the Psalms, does not prove the inefficacy of the Psalms. This problem exists only for those who overlook the dynamism of the Gospel story. To be able to pray the Psalms it is not enough to know them. Surely S. is aware of this. According to Luke, till after Jesus' death, the disciples were foolish and slow of heart to understand and penetrate the Scriptures. So the risen Lord "interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself", and "he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures". How could they pray the Psalms without this enlightenment? So S. is not justified in supposing that the disciples were possessed of "the theological vision of the Psalmist" (p 270) already during Jesus' ministry They could not pray the Psalms just because "they were at home in the culture in which the Psalms originated".

How could the Psalms be suitable for the ordinary faithful if the conditions for their proper use are so exalted and exacting? "Babes and infants" understand and they chant the praises of God while "the wise and the prudent" fail to do so (see Ps 8 2; Mt 11·25) The thousand difficulties experienced by subtle theologians are not real to simple-minded, humble believers who obey their heart

Vidyajyoti,
23, Raj Niwas Marg,
Delhi 110054

C M CHERIAN, S.J

Dear Editor,

In my article "The Psalms Another View" (VIDYAJYOTI, June-July 1984), I said that only Matthew reports those words, "My God my God, why have you forsaken me?" My friend has brought to my notice that this is not correct, because Mark too has those words I regret this mistake However, the question remains whether these words are really a logion of Jesus, or only a Judeo-Christian meditation on the death of Jesus

St Joseph's Seminary
4, Tashkent Road,
Allahabad 211001

Subash ANAND

Socio-Pastoral Dimensions of Priestly Formation Edited by Peter FERNANDO *Indore, Satprakashan Sanchar Kendra* and *Pune, Ishvani Kendra* Pp vi-172 Rs 25 00, $ 1 50

"This volume contains papers presented at the National Consultation on the Socio-Pastoral Dimensions of Priestly Formation, held from 31st January to 4th February, 1983, at the Ecumenical Christian Centre, Bangalore This consultation was organized by the Indo-German Social Service Society, the Pastoral Sociology Institute, and the Coady International Institute, with the collaboration of the CBCI Commission for Clergy and Religious" (From the Editor's Introductory Note)

The book deals with the Social dimension of our training as ministers of the Good News to the modern man It makes a number of suggestions to improve the formation so that the ministers may better understand and cater to the needs of the concrete human person in his or her social setting. The book decries the centralisation of power in the hands of the clergy and says that often the church persons become part of the oppressive socio-political system, favouring the selfish interests of the rich and the powerful It calls for developing critical awareness of the structures of oppression and domination prevalent in our society It recommends teaching in the local language as a step towards being more at home with our own country and its masses It is sad to note, however, that the very publication of the book and the holding of the Seminar on which it is based rely heavily on foreign or partly foreign agencies like the Coady International Institute, Canada and the Indo-German Social Service Society The book is a welcome effort at pointing out the deficiencies in the formation of church personal in the area of socio-pastoral awareness. It recommends more exposure to and analysis of the social reality on the part of both students and professors in seminaries, and more contact with the laity in their very training More papers from people directly involved in seminary education would have been appreciated.

FRANCIS PARMAR, S.J.

Book Reviews

Sacred Scripture

Jesus in His Lifetime. By John MARSH. *London, Ridgwick & Jackson*, 1981. Pp. 282. £ 10.00

In this book the author publishes the lectures he delivered at Duke University in 1958 They are a contribution to the New Quest of the historical Jesus In view of the scepticism of contemporary scholarship regarding our Gospels the author attempts "to pose rightly and to answer truthfully" the question whether the story of Jesus in his lifetime can "be told with integrity to the typical 'twentieth century man' ?" (p 11) The work consists of five parts

Parts 1-3 are of an introductory character Part 1 briefly touches upon the difficulties which the modern reader faces because of the mode of writing about Jesus, in his time In this connection a few remarks are made about gospel criticism sources, 'forms', redaction One is particularly happy to find here an excellent presentation of the 'allusive method' in writing history, which too often is overlooked in debating about the historicity of the gospels This point is explained by distinguishing between "what was taking place" and "what was going on" (p 28f) This principle is basic throughout the book

The two pages which constitute Part 2, "Jesus in the Judaism of his time" point to the atmosphere of the milieu, the home and family of Jesus and their possible or probable influence upon the boy or the young man

Part 3 exposes the main outline of a gospel 1 A *Prologue*, the Infancy (Mt, Lk) or a theological consideration about the divine origin and mission of Jesus (Jn) On this occasion a few remarks are made about the historical character of the gospels and the evangelists' understanding of the 'real' Jesus 2 The *central part* of each gospel, viz the ministry of Jesus, from the Baptism to the death and burial The devices used by the evangelists may differ greatly from our modern conception of history writing. Therefore, "it is very important to 'decode' correctly the 'going on' indicators" (p. 94). "Miracle stories are thus primarily recounted as 'going on' indicators, rather than as 'taking place' narratives" (p 95); this, however does not mean that the whole idea of miracles must be given up 3. *Epilogue*, viz, the resurrection, by which Jesus remains united with his Church, challenges and redeems the world through her

The reconstruction of 'Jesus in his lifetime' (Part 4) "does not purport to be an exact reconstruction of what took place in the lifetime of Jesus It intends to help the ordinary reader of the gospels to understand what was going on in that life, viz God's plan of salvation, originating from his love for man As to the outward happening 'just what took place', no author can recover The narrative of Jesus' lifetime is traced out only in broad lines, bringing out some of the most characteristic points in each episode and marking the meaning and symbolism of the episode. In view of the readership intended many problems are passed over, and in disputed texts options are made without giving any justification, this was unavoidable Scholars will question a number of details or interpretations, on the whole, however, the 'reconstruction' of the episodes is acceptable, pointing out 'what was going on' — Strangely, the author shows little interest in the Infancy narratives though these offer much ground for bringing out the 'allusive theology'

At times one wonders whether there is not a danger of falling into allegorizing, v g the parallel between the bridegroom at Cana and Jesus who could be thought of as the divine bridegroom (Mk 2 19) now come to claim his bride, the chosen people of Israel, to ensure the continuation of a true Israel of God (p 117) Similarly seeing in the miracle at Cana the symbol of *Jesus' gift* of himself in his self-sacrificing death, turning "the purificatory waters of Judaism into the celebratory wine of the Christian eucharist, the feast at which the true Israel of God is replenished in both rite and reality" (p 118). — Jesus, we are told, must have been informed about Judas' plan of betraying him possibly by friends in the highest

circles, v.g. Nicodemus or Joseph of Arimathea. Even "it is possible, if not very probable, that Judas himself informed Jesus of his plan, in the hope that he would be encouraged to declare himself as the militant political Messiah that the people expected and desired" (p. 204).

In the *Conclusion* Dr Marsh explains how his stand differs from that of the liberals and Bultmann, by reading the gospels "as a record not only of what took place when Jesus lived, but also as a statement of what was going on in what he did and experienced. The gospel reader is thus freed from having to suppose that every incident recorded took place 'just so'; instead he can see the gospels as providing him with clues as to what was going on" (p 248). A note about "Jesus as the son of God" gives an explanation to readers who will have noticed that the title 'Son of God' is used in this book for the most part without a capital letter for the word 'son'. This is done in order to bring out the predominantly 'corporate' character of the notion of 'sonship' in the OT, as Jesus heard it at the baptism. Jesus as a man of divine stature was not without a community of men with him to share his life and his very being: he acted and spoke as the Messiah with a people of the Messiah about him. A second note refers to "John the Baptist, Jesus and political reality". John's baptism and exhortation to penance or conversion, included a warning of urgency. Similarly Jesus' preaching included a warning of urgency, even specifying the imminent ruin of Jerusalem — Caiphas' political cynicism (Jn 11 50) 'was turned into an evangelical promise by the action of God: crucifixion was shown by the resurrection to be the historical centre of what had been going on throughout history, the demonstration of God's love and forgiveness in bringing all men to share the life that is life indeed. 'Jesus in his lifetime' is still accessible to those who want to meet him' (p 254)

J. VOLCKAERT, S.J.

The Atonement. A Study of the Origins of the Doctrine in the New Testament. By Martin HENGEL. Translated by John Bowden. *London, SCM Press*, 1981. Pp. xii-112. £ 3 95 (paper)

This volume and two previous works by the author, *The Son of God* (1976) and *Crucifixion in the Ancient World and the Folly of the Message of the Cross* (1977) form an introduction to a comprehensive Christology of the New Testament. The book, as the sub-title indicates, is a study of the origin of the interpretation of the death of Jesus as an atoning sacrifice. It consists of two chapters. I. "Preliminary Questions". As a matter of fact, this chapter is not concerned with mere preliminary questions. The chapter gives a survey of Graeco-Roman categories of religious thought, "closer or more distant analogies to the interpretation of the death of Jesus as a *presupposition for his exaltation* and also as a representative atoning death for others" (p 4). The notion of atoning death is widely found in Greek literature from the time of Homer onwards, as is exemplified by quotations referring to the apotheosis of the dying hero, or people dying for the city and for friends, or for the law and for truth. The sacrifice of the individual was also often understood as an expiatory, atoning sacrifice. The Gentile was familiar with these notions, he understood them in his own way by means of myth, patriotic sagas and dramas. Yet, "though the message of Jesus on the cross for all men was not incomprehensible even to the educated audience of the Gentile world..., the primitive Christian preaching of the crucified Messiah must have seemed aesthetically and ethically repulsive to them" (p 31), more particularly as there was no question here of any myth but of "a Jewish craftsman of the more recent past, executed as a criminal, with whom the whole present and future salvation of all men was linked" (p 31). II. "The Origin of the Soteriological Interpretation of the Death of Jesus". Four points are examined: Pauline formulae and the pre-Pauline tradition, the crucified Messiah, the atoning death of Jesus in the earliest community, historical and traditio-historical objections (which occasion further development of the author's thesis).

The ante-Pauline tradition behind some Pauline formulae, especially "he was given up/died for our sins/for us" is deduced from the fact that Paul quotes the tradition which was already fixed when he wrote to the Corinthians in A D 49/50. The same tradition is found behind Mk 10 45 (Mt 20.28) and Mk 14 24 (Mt 26 28). "By contrast the allegedly independent, decidedly post-Easter 'theologies' of the so-called Q or Marcan 'communities', detached completely from the person of Jesus, are artificial products of modern exegesis"

(p. 35). The examination of the Pauline (and Synoptic) formulae leads to the conclusion that the origin of the Christian message of atonement ultimately has to be sought in Isaiah 53 seen in the light of the Easter experience, as expressed in "the kerygma of the Lord of the community, risen, exalted to the right hand of God, and still to come" (p. 66).

According to Jewish expectation God would grant victory to his Messiah; but the thought that the Messiah would die on the cross as a criminal was a scandal, totally alien to the Jewish tradition in the first century A.D Opinions of Jesus' death as the death of the 'righteous sufferer or the innocent' (Wisd 2-5), or the 'martyr prophet', do not correspond to the picture presented in the Gospels when they refer to psalms which are exclusively Messianic " "The suffering 'of the righteous' is to be integrated completely and utterly into the suffering of the Messiah *The Messiah alone is the righteous and sinless one par excellence*" (p 41) The offensive character of the Christian message appears also in Mk 15·13-16 6 where the verb 'to crucify' appears eight times, and the noun 'the cross' of the Messiah three times "Only those who understand how extremely offensive this word will have been to both Jewish and Gentile ears will be able to grasp what that means" (p 43) However, we ought to go beyond the theological interpretation of the evangelists "There is a difinite intrinsic christological connection between the intentions of such different-sounding saying as 1 Cor 1 23, Mk 15 38, Acts 6 13 and Gal 3 13" (p 44f) We must note also the 'once and for all' in such different texts as Rom 6 10 1 Pt 3 18, Heb 7 27, 9 13, etc "As there is a similar multiplicity of cultic terminology in individual deutero-Pauline letters, in I Peter, the Johannine corpus Revelation, and above all Hebrews, and it is even more prominent here than it is in Paul, it seems likely that this language is not fortuitous and did not arise on the periphery of christological development, but – along with the formulae about dying and 'surrendering'— has a common root "(p 46)

The earliest community put at the heart of the proclamation also the forgiveness of sins (central for the Baptist and Jesus), as the acts of God's love through his Messiah The idea of forgiveness of sins was not the result of some 'theological reflection' by the disciples, they had experienced the forgiveness Peter who denied Jesus; the disciples who, all of them, abandoned their Master when he was arrested; Paul the persecutor, the blasphemer. Forgiveness is shown particularly in the appearances of Jesus and his greeting 'shalom'.— "The surrender formula indicates an original Semitic form which must come either from the Aramaic-speaking community or from Jesus himself A further starting point is the *Lord's Supper*. Both the paradosis in 1 Cor 11·23-25, where Paul refers to a historical event with a specific date, and the account in Mark 14·22-25, contains the interpretation of the death of Jesus as an atoning saving event " (p 53)

The conciseness of the argument with its shades defies any attempt at giving a proper summary of the study. The book requires attentive reading The general reader may find occasionally some difficulty because of quotations given in the original language without translation In spite of the fragmentary character of the work as a part of the prolegomena to a comprehensive Christology of the NT, as mentioned above, the work is impressive and opens many interesting insights A copious bibliography and extensive footnotes further enrich the book

J VOLCKAERT, S.J

Easter Enigma By John WENHAM *Exeter, The Paternoster Press*, 1984 Pp 162 £ 2 95

Whereas most scholars are of the opinion that the resurrection narratives in the Gospels defy all attempts at harmonizing them, the author while residing in Jerusalem, carefully studying the people, the place and the text, gradually came to see "that these resurrection stories exhibit in a remarkable way the well-known characteristics of accurate and independent reporting, for superficially they show great disharmony, but on close examination the details gradually fall into place" (p 11) The book consists of eleven short chapters 'Setting the Scene· Jerusalem and Bethany" (ch 1), "The Actors· Mary Magdalene" (ch 2), "The Other Actors" (ch 3), "The Five Writers" the evangelists and Paul (ch. 4). The next chapters, the core of the book, propose a harmonization of the narratives "Good Friday" (ch 5), "Saturday" (ch 6), "Early on Easter Sunday Morning" (ch 7), "The First Appearances" (ch 8); "Later that day and the Sunday following" (ch. 9), "In Galilee" (ch.10), "Farewell" (ch. 11)

Before beginning the harmonization proper (chs 5-11) the author informs

the reader that "throughout, it must be realised, we shall be concerned with historical probabilities based upon the conclusions reached so far, but we shall try not to weary the reader with endless 'probablys'. These must be taken as read" (p. 54). He also speaks of "reasoned conjecture" (p 70) — A survey of the harmonizing arrangement of various episodes is out of the question. A few original views will indicate the tone of the work

Mary Magdalene is identified with the sinner of Lk 7 and Mary of Bethany. This 'working hypothesis' is justified at some length (pp 22-33, 129-131) because of the general view distinguishing the three persons, a view which makes the sequel of chs 7 8 of Lk inexplicable. The beloved disciple is the evangelist who could refer to himself as *the* beloved disciple because he and Jesus his cousin had been lifelong friends. John was known to the high priest because he may have been a priest ("a matter of heredity, descendant in the male line of Aaron") "there is a possibility that John was known to the high priest as an occasional officiant in the temple" (p 41). John had a house in Jerusalem because of the fish business. "Zebedee & Sons of Galilee were contracted to supply fish to the high priest's palace in Jerusalem" (p 42), a detail which would explain also why John was known to the high priest's servants as well. The unnamed companion of Cleopas on their way to Emmaus (Lk 24) is supposed to be Luke himself and the empty house to which they went in Emmaus to be his. The "brothers of Jesus" were children of both Joseph and Mary, after the birth of Jesus at least four other boys and three girls.

It is impossible to say how long Mary continued to live in John's care. All that the text of Jn 19 26f demands or even suggests is that in the early stages of the crucifixion soon after the soldiers had cast lots for his tunic Jesus wishing to spare his mother the sight of continuing hours of agony committed her to John. He at once took her away to his home. He saw her through the appalling crisis but by the time of the ascension she appears to have been reunited with her family' (p 139).

Matters requiring technical knowledge are kept out of the body of the book and are confined to the notes at the back. A short discussion of gospel criticism is found in Appendix I. The author begins by explaining why he has given little space to the discussion of source criticism, and even less to form and redaction criticism. The reason is not that "I think them unimportant or illegitimate or valueless when judiciously handled; it is simply because this is not the book in which to deal with them. On the one hand they would demand too much technicality and too much space, and on the other the discussion would in the outcome be largely irrelevant" (p 126). The author makes some sharp remarks about critical theories, not altogether without foundation though. As to 'Harmonistic Exegesis' (p 127f) he justifies his principle of appealing to the evidence from one gospel to throw light on the intended meaning of another. "Of course, the individuality of different works (where these can be discerned) must be taken into account. Forced harmonizing is worthless. The tendency today, however, is the opposite to force the New Testament writings into disharmony, in order to emphasize their individuality" (p 128). 'One thing is certain. Jesus was a concrete, complex and fascinating figure of history, and any method of study which fails to reveal him as such is working on the wrong lines" (p 128).

Appendix II develops some arguments about 'The Sinner of Luke 7 and Mary Magdalene of Luke 8" completing ch 2 — Appendix III considers various views about "The Mother and Brothers of Jesus', theories of relationship. There is also a note on the family's move from Nazareth to Capernaum and a note on Jesus the Just the brother of the Lord "who came to love much because he had been forgiven much. Though he had lived so close to Jesus all his life, he had disbelieved him and at the end had not stood by him. But he was to become leader of the church in Jerusalem itself and was to write of himself as a slave of the Lord Jesus Christ'" (p 139). Diagrams aid to follow the development of the events, of the actors and of the course of the argumentation.

"So ends an investigation which we believe has shown that the charge of irreconcilability brought against the resurrection stories has not been proved. May be there are problems not fully solved and problems given a wrong solution but when every effort has been made to give the details of the narratives their full weight, they add up to a consistent story" (p 124). The publishers characterize the book as "a remarkable piece of detective work". The book offers interesting reading, but it is bound to raise questions and elicit reactions.

J VOLCKAERT, SJ

Christ Ascended. By Brian K. DONNE. *Exeter, The Paternoster Press,* 1983. *Pp.* xiv-98. £ 3.80.

The sub-title characterizes the book as "A Study in the Significance of the Ascension of Jesus Christ in the New Testament". The author who is a minister, wonders why the Ascension is celebrated so little. The book is a plea to take the ascension as a historical event, distinct from the resurrection (Part I); the theology of the event (Part II) should manifest its importance (Part III). Part I gives a brief "Analysis of Relevant New Testament Passages". The Lucan writings (ch 1) present two accounts of the one event, differing in purpose but both clearly indicating "a definite and final parting which is distinct from the Resurrection" (p 10) -- The other NT references to the ascension (ch 2) are found in the Pauline writings (whether completely or partially Pauline), in 1 Pt and in the Apocalypse. Part II "Theological Evaluation of the Ascension" — 1 "The Exaltation of Jesus Christ" (ch 3) is expressed in symbolical language, viz his sitting at the right hand of the Father. Just as in the case of the resurrection, the initiative of the ascension is the Father's. As a Christological event the ascension asserts that Jesus reigns — 2 "The Heavenly Intercession" (ch 4) of Jesus, is the fundamental idea of the whole NT. Jesus is priest and king, and so his intercession is permanent. His intercession is more than prayer, "it is the total life of himself, offered on behalf of and entering into his people at every point, and in every circumstance on earth" (p 38) — 3 "The Holy Spirit" (ch 5) is a corporate gift from Christ. His main work is to form Christ in us, so that we may become like him and see him as he is. The spirit interprets the mind of the Ascended Lord to his Church on earth, ever recreating the life of her members — 4 "The Christian Hope" (ch 6) necessarily includes both the resurrection and the ascension. Just as through faith we share in Christ's resurrection so in hope we await our sharing in his ascension and exaltation — 5 "The Final Glory" (ch 7) at the parousia will be the revelation of Christ's present reign known now only by faith. Part III "The Permanent Value of the Ascension for Christology" — "The Importance of the Ascension for Contemporary Belief" (ch 8) can be seen from the prominence which the ascension gives to the centrality of Christ. Indicating that the post-resurrection appearances were being terminated the ascension demonstrates that Christ remains present as king, priest and prophet. The ascension manifests Christ as Son of God and Son of Man, conqueror of evil, not in the sense that suffering and tragedy have disappeared from the earth, but in the sense that for the believer the ultimate defeat of all evil is assured. — The Exalted Lord is unique, at once in an exclusive and all-inclusive sense "exclusive in so far that the Exalted Jesus can have no rival claim to his unique position as the Son of God. At the same time, the Exalted Lord is all-inclusive because he is, in himself, the very embodiment of the human race, the first principle of its existence, the representative of mankind from its beginning to its end" (p 65). "Theologically and empirically, the Ascension of Jesus Christ is at the very heart of the New Testament" (p 67).

The approach of the book is pastoral, avoiding exegetical and theological exposition and technicalities, though the development of the argument consists almost of a chain of quotations from scholarly authors. Some points are questionable, v g the repeated emphasis upon the lapse of time between the risen Christ's appearances on Sunday morning and the gift of the Spirit to the disciples in the evening, taken as a basis for arguing that the resurrection and ascension/exaltation must be two distinct events, since the Spirit could not be imparted until Jesus was glorified (Jn 3 39). A similar argument is based upon the forty days of Acts 1 3 which according to the author should be taken literally, the period, moreover, being seen as a time of a progressive transformation of the risen body of Christ. It is also difficult to see how "it is only after his exaltation when he comes in glory that Jesus becomes the Son of Man" (p 33), or that "it is only when Jesus is 'lifted up' (John 12 22) from the earth only after the time when he goes to the Father (cf John 16 7), that the Holy Spirit is given" (p 41), an interpretation of 'lifted up' which goes against the meaning of the saying given explicitly by the evangelist (Jn 12 33). Also questionable is the interpretation of *analēmpsis* (= assumption) in Lk 9 51 as "an anticipation of the ascension-exaltation" (pp 30 and 33), whereas the remark at the outset of the journey to Jerusalem surely refers to Jesus' death by which he was to be 'taken up' (= taken away), a meaning moreover, which must not too lightly be excluded from the verb *anelēmphthē* (= he was

taken up) in Acts 1:2 and probably also 1:22 (in spite of v. 11 referring to the ascension, since there 'taken up' is specified as 'taken up to heaven').

In spite of what looks to me over-emphasis of a thesis with questionable arguments the author's pastoral attempt will help Christians understand better the meaning of the Ascended Christ and the believer's union with him in his exalted life, though now still only in faith and hope.

J VOLCKAERT, S.J

Communism in the Bible. By José Porfirio MIRANDA Translated from the Spanish by Robert R. Barr *London, SCM Press*, 1982 Pp x-86 £ 3 50 (paper)

The book consists of three chapters 1 *Christianity is communism* Communism is neither Marxism nor materialism or atheism Communism means community of goods In Acts 2 44f and 4 32-35 "Luke's normative intention stands out There is no question of a special lifestyle that could be considered peculiar to some Christians in contrast with the general mass of Christians" (p 7) No author of the NT differs from Lk's position The communism of the first Christians failed one might object So did the Sermon on the Mount, yet this does not deprive it of its normative character But Peter's words to Ananias (Acts 5 4) imply that the communism of the first Christians was optional According to Luke Christianity is optional communism is not Miranda puts great stress on the view that the kingdom is on earth true it may be provisionally in heaven but ultimately it will descend to earth The Kingdom requires a classless society Jesus was a communist His example and teaching made renunciation of property a condition for entering the kingdom Communism is not a way of 'perfection

2 *Why communism?* 'Because any other system consists in the exploitation and spoliation of some people by others through the imposition of different prices" (p 30). Jesus does not condemn wealth as such he attacks *differentiating* or relative wealth, the fact that some are poor, others rich he has made this clear in the parable of Dives and Lazarus Dives is condemned just because he was rich The same teaching is found in the OT no differentiating wealth can be acquired by legitimate means The problem of evil is a social problem "The poor did not ask to come into the world. Their sufferings, deprivations, and humiliations are completely unmerited. Since it was God who set in motion the machinery of creation, God ought to feel a certain responsibility, even though it is the rich who are at fault for the injustice committed against the poor" (p. 41).

3 *Politics and violence in Jesus of Nazareth* The chapter begins by refuting three texts which have been exploited by the idealogues of the establishment 1. "You will always have the poor with you" 'Rightists' change the present tense ('you have') into a future tense ('you shall have'), and interpret Christ's words to mean that class society will never be eliminated, the Greek *pantote* does not mean 'always', but at all moments, ceaselessly, continuously 2 "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's" Miranda notes that this saying of Jesus is ironic "Jesus' ploy is to deny all governmental authority, but in such terms that no one can accuse him before the governor" (p 65) 3 "My kingdom is not of this world" As a matter of fact Jesus never said that his kingdom is not *of* this world Jesus kingdom is *of* this world, but not *from* this world" (p 65) - Having disposed of the objections the author concludes since the Gospel preaches a classless society, elimination of wealth and repression of the rich, Christianity must engage in politics just as Christ did Suetonius remarks that Christians were "ever in frantic tumult at the instigation of someone called Chrestos" Christ died the death of a political criminal or revolutionary, crucified together with two criminals 'How could his message be apolitical if 'the Kingdom of God' means that God reigns and not human beings ?" (p 72) Jesus explicitly approves and defends the use of violence, he never disapproved the Father's conduct, who attacked "with hand aloft and flexed arm against the oppressors" (Dt 4 34) Jesus condemning the Scribes and Pharisees who allowed people to declare *qorban* any support parents might need (Mk 7 9-13) quoted Ex 21 17 "he who curses father and mother must die" Never has the OT or the Gospel considered that the commandment of loving one's neighbour could be at variance with vindictive justice and with the obligation violently to repel the oppressor of the human community Jesus approved violence when he 'whipped' out of the Temple sellers and buyers Here Miranda remarks that the evangelist omitted something. The traders were many, and they

bad guards. "Without a doubt Jesus had placed himself at the head of a burly group of his followers in an action which can only be characterized as an assault in the temple. By what authority do you deny, precisely to the proletariat, in the name of Christianity, the legitimacy of a type of action performed by Jesus Christ himself?" (p. 78).

The author begins and ends his brief Foreword by stating that "this is a manifesto.. a biblical manifesto which submits to the rigor of scientific exegesis and accepts its challenge. If the thesis is not demonstrated by the meticulous scholarship, consider the thesis unposited I repeat this is a manifesto. And it seeks to make itself heard by all the poor of the earth" (p ix). The author's views often are expressed forcibly and make the reader reflect Unfortunately many arguments based on Scripture do not convince me and the interpretation of texts is rather subjective, superficial or forced for the sake of the argument, v.g. to prove that the Kingdom is to be realized on earth we are told to look at the Lord's prayer where we say "your kingdom come", not "take us to your kingdom", or better still, to the prayer of the repentant criminal on the cross "Jesus remember me when you come to your kingdom" Jesus answers "This very day in paradise" (Lk 23.42f) "Evidently, paradise, as in all the literature of that time, is a provisional place, pending the arrival of the moment in which the Messiah comes to his kingdom – which is surely on the earth, since the good thief is on the earth when he says 'when you come' "(p 17) -- The early Christians presented a version of Christianity different from the Gospel, under the influence of fear of repression during the persecutions of the first three centuries However, "when the persecution was over, when the official church had acquired not only status, but dominant status in a class society, fear of repression ceased to be the motive for this documentarily indefensible falsification of the gospel Now it was upheld for the personal convenience of the hierarchies, and for fear of a gospel which would unequivocally criticize the recently invented hierarchical structure of the church" (p. 68) The book suffers by the use of sarcasm and name-calling All those who do not agree with the author's views are "escapist theologians" who are blind (p. 14), they intentionally misunderstand the gospel message (p. 2ff), they deliberately falsify the message (p. 67), and if the texts had not been available they "would have found another, — any other, since the end is determined before hand, namely, to avoid the message of Jesus and to this end any means are good" (p. 58). — However, if the reader can overlook or ignore these unpleasant details he will find in the book material worthy of consideration

J. VOLCKAERT, S.J.

Matthew. The Teacher's Gospel. By Paul S MINEAR. *London, Dartom, Longman & Todd*, 1984. Pp. xiv-194. £ 5 50.

Where to begin in reviewing this deep and beautiful book ? Professor G B. Caird in his introduction tells us that the author has concentrated on the question. what significance did this Gospel have for the Evangelist and the Church for which he wrote ? The book could also bear the title Matthew on Ministry: the Meditations of a minister.

Paul Minear is himself an ordained minister in the united Church of Christ and is an eminent professor of Biblical theology in the Yale University Divinity School He sees the author of the Gospel of Matthew as 'a *teacher* who designed his work to be maximum help to *teachers* in Christian congregations' (p 3) Today Minear sees these 'teachers' not as "seminary or university scholars but pastors and teachers whose primary responsibility is the instruction of those who have been called as followers of Jesus Christ" (*ibid*) It is a help to such people that he has written this book The first chapter, "Introduction to the Gospel", takes up the author, the audience, the arrangement, the date, and the source of the Gospel The next seven chapters deal with the different sections of the Gospel "Traditions concerning the Origin of Jesus" (1 1-17, 1 18-25, 2 1-23), "Beginnings in the work of salvation" (3 1-12, 3 13-4 22, 4.23-7:19), "The Physician and the Crowds" (8 1-9 34, 9.35-11·1); "The Mysterious Presence of the Kingdom" (11·2-12 50, 13·1-52), "The case of the Crowds" (13 53-16 12, 16 13-17·27; 18·1-19.2), "Preparation for the Passion" (19 3-20:28; 20·29-21:22, 21 23-24.2, 24 3-25 46), 'Covenant and Mandate" (26.1-56, 26 57-27.10, 27 11-54, 27:55-28.20).

I enjoyed reading this book and wish that more scripture 'scholars' would write books like this. Like the Gospels, this book does something to the heart of the reader. Much prayer, I think, went into the writing of it. There is no

hurry in the exposition, and the style of itself draws the reader.

There are two appendixes. One contain notes for the teacher on each of the chapters. They are of help to one who might want to teach the Gospel or use it for discussion with parish groups. The second appendix contains six excerpts from other writings of the author on themes related to the Gospel. They are very good. I recommend this book highly to all lovers of the Gospel of Matthew. In and beyond commentary they will find here contemplation; they will also find how radical Jesus is.

Roman LEWICKI, S.J

Baibal bhasyashastra siddhant aur paddati (Theory and Method of Biblical Hermeneutics). By Rev Dr Emmanuel E JAMES. *Indore, Hindi Theological Literature Committee*, 1984. Pp xvi-164. Rs 10.00.

The purpose of this book is to develop a Biblical hermeneutics appropriate to India's heritage, its history, culture, language, literature, etc. With this in mind Dr James has written this book in Hindi as a text book for the B Th and B D students. But it is not merely a text book. It can also be used as a tool book by students of theology, pastors and by all lovers of the Bible.

The book consists of two parts in thirteen chapters. The first part has six chapters and deals with the theory of Biblical hermeneutics. After a general introduction to the Bible the author shows the need of hermeneutic and its basic principles. He studies the various approaches to the Bible in the Christian tradition and the common characteristics of them all. The second part deals with the methods of biblical hermeneutics and their various principles: inspiration, literary context, literary forms, Biblical theology and praxis. The last two chapters give specific suggestions for particular Biblical texts, and for an Indian Biblical hermeneutic. The author has taken care to use as few words in English as possible thus making a contribution to the popularising of Hindi technical theological language. When technical words in English or in Hindi are used, efforts are made to explain them and describe their meaning in simple English. Thus the language is simple and flowing easily, generally unencumbered.

Bernard MURMU, S.J.

Spirituality

Addhyatmaprasnam (Writings from the Philokalia on Prayer of the Heart). By Saintly FATHERS OF THE EASTERN ORTHODOX CHURCH. Translated into Malayalam by Swami SIDDHINATHANANDA. *Vagamon, Kerala, Kurisumala Ashram*, 1983. Pp. xxxii-466. Rs 20.

The publication of this volume was meant to commemorate the Silver Jubilee celebrations of Kurisumala Ashram. It is a splendid ecumenical achievement. The translation is the work of a distinguished Hindu sannyasi of Sri Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Kalai, Calicut. The Swamiji's MS was gone through by Prof K M Tharakan, Syrian Orthodox lay theologian who has high praise for the literary quality of the translation. He has contributed a 10-page introduction, while the internationally well-known scholar Paulose Mar Gregorios, Syrian Orthodox Metropolitan of Delhi, has written a long Preface. The printing was done by Christavashram, an ecumenical ashram of the Church of South India. There is a Publisher's Foreword by Francis Acharya of Kurisumala Ashram.

Philokalia (Love of the Good and the Beautiful) is a prose anthology of Greek monastic texts which were the product of a movement for spiritual renewal in Eastern monasticism and devotional life. It was first published in 1782. Its Slavonic version became the favourite spiritual book of all classes of the Russian laity in the 19h century. It is through translations of this work that the tradition of ceaseless prsyer or Jesus prayer and contemplation became widely known among Orthodox as well as Western Christians. The attractive Malayalam translation of this spiritual classic is bound to have a great appeal for spiritual seekers in and outside Kerala, irrespective of their religious affiliation.

C M CHERIAN, S J

The Dart of Longing Love. (Daily Readings from *The Cloud of Unknowing*). Translated with an Introduction by Robert LLEWELYN. *London, Darton, Longman and Todd* 1983. Pp viii-71. £ 1.75.

The anonymous work, *The Cloud of Unknowing*, is generally considered the greatest spiritual classic of the 14th century mystical movement in England. It was written for the instruction of a devoted disciple who found himself in

a state of desolation, "as it were a cloud of unknowing". The work stresses the primacy of the will (the faculty of loving) over the intellect in the work of contemplation: "By love He may be grasped and held, by thought never".

Robert Llewelyn, editor of *Enfolded in Love*, Daily Readings with Julian of Norwich, has now produced this selection of Daily Readings from the *Cloud of Unknowing*. A revival of interest in prayer, meditation and contemplation is a characteristic of our times. Those searching for some further help in this area will be delighted to have this handy, beautifully produced little volume.

C. M. CHERIAN, S J

Nāma Japa. (The Prayer of the Name) By Sister VANDANA. *Bombay, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan*, 1984. Pp xvi-308. Rs. 40

The Jesus Prayer and the Prayer of the Name have strong roots in Christian soil, both Eastern and Western, and have many parallel developments in the *Japa* traditions of India, whether Hindu or other. Sr Vandana collects in this book much material from a wide range of devotional literature of many different traditions. The book consists of three parts. The first part deals with the spiritual praxis — and it is quite according to the Indian and, indeed, modern tradition to place the praxis before the theory. In this part the Mātāji explains in detail the various forms in which the Prayer of the Name can be used to deepen one's union with the Divine. Although on reading these pages one may feel cramped by the many regulations and directions offered, deriving from many traditions and authors, but above all from personal experience, yet the author leaves ample scope to the freedom of the spiritual seeker who must use the means that he or she finds helpful. The second part contains the theory of the prayer of the Name. Many theological and devotional doctrines from various centuries and many countries are put together to make a rather undistinguishable broth. Although syncretism need not be condemned a priori, and the symbiosis of various traditions is surely useful – this is what dialogue is about — still it need not be done uncritically. Hinduism itself is not uniform but has many different mārgas. To pass from early Upanishads to late Russian authors without batting an eye may not be particularly helpful towards building up a "theory", if that is indeed the purpose of this section. The third part collects extracts from the best known authors of all traditions, so that the seeker can come in direct contact with the teachings of the great masters of the spiritual life.

The book is more devotional than theological. It is the merit of Sr Vandana that her writing, containing so much of Christian spirituality, together with Hindu and other contributions, should be published in a series of the influential Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. The editing however is not very good, as it often happens with devotional books meant for a wide public. One can agree with the encomium which Swami Chidananda of Rishikesh makes in his forward to the book: "Sister Vandana is rendering an immense spiritual service to the people of present-day world by expounding the great tradition and the practice of this specific *Sādhanā* Path, through this present book, *Nāma-Japa*. This treatise will indeed benefit innumerable seekers upon the Path of God all over the world. I wish this valuable book the widest possible circulation which it most certainly deserves in every way. It contains a veritable wealth of valuable information and instruction culled from numerous authentic sources. It will inspire the readers to adopt this Sādhanā into their practical spiritual life." (x)

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S J

And Liberation Theology

We Drink from Our Own Wells. The Spiritual Journey of a People. By Gustavo GUTIERREZ. *London, SCM Press*, 1984. Pp xxi-181. Price £ 5 50

This book is most timely. It appears just when Latin American Liberation Theology seems to be under a cloud. Because some of its votaries had made use of the Marxist method of social analysis, it appeared to the traditional minded as unchristian. In fact from the inception of Liberation Theology in the early seventies, the kind of reflection it represented was conscious that it was preceded by the spiritual experience of Christians committed to the process of liberation.

In part one of the work, the author says something about the contextual experience that is the matrix or crucible of the spirituality now being born in Latin America. In part two, the main aspects of any Christian spirituality as a way of following Jesus are traced. In part three, the author outlines the specific

forms which the encounter with the Lord takes in Latin America and the people's journey in accordance with the Spirit

Christian spirituality hitherto has been largely geared to elitist minorities Now we have the spectacle of an overwhelming mass of people living as it were as aliens in their own land, suffering untold torments at the hands of the vested interests, but still open to grace and the hope of salvation The spirituality born in Latin America is that of an ecclesial community that is trying to make effective its solidarity with the poorest of this world While it has this uniqueness, it is linked with other spiritual experiences that are the terrain in which genuine theological reflection strikes root The author illustrates this by the experience of the first Christians as well as that of the great mystics like St John of the Cross In all these the paschal mystery of life through death is in evidence The following of Jesus or 'walking according to the Spirit" is an activity undertaken within the community of a people on the move

Liberation Theology has been accused of neglecting the personal dimension of inner conversion However, Gutiérrez makes it quite clear that a conversion is the starting point of every spiritual journey as well as a feature of its continual movement He also shows how the Christian themes of gratuitousness joy spiritual childhood and community linked with solitude are verified in the new spirituality that is growing up among the masses of the dispossessed and exploited in Latin America The dark night of injustice is being illumined by a new hope

The work is enriched by numerous quotations from witnesses like Archbishop Romero who have suffered and even laid down their lives in solidarity with the poor The foreword by the well known spiritual writer Henri Nouwen brings out the relevance of the work to affluent countries or societies What is happening in the Christian communities of Latin America seems to be a part of God's way of calling them to conversion Indeed, the extraordinary events in a troubled continent have lessons for both the oppressed and the oppressors in other regions

For those who have voluntarily chosen the path of following Christ in his poverty, the work clearly shows that solidarity with the poor and struggle against the inhuman poverty of the masses is an indispensable requirement of their commitment.

G Lobo S.J

Christian Realism and Liberation Theology. Practical Theologies in Creative Conflict. By Dennis McCann *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books,* 1981. Pp. vi-250 Price $ 9.95.

This is meant to be a critique of Liberation Theology by bringing it into creative contrast with Reinhold Niebuhr's *Christian Ethics*. The author seems to be a disciple of this seminal thinker and hence naturally finds that Niebuhr's Christian realism is more satisfactorily wedded to the New Testament message than contemporary liberation theologies

Niebuhr was one of the pioneers in "practical theology" that has little sympathy with pure speculation. He was prepared for this role by his earlier Marxist experience and later pastoral committment While he admired the Russian revolutionary idealism, he was disillusioned by the totalitarian tendencies in Soviet Communism Gradually, the experience of grace in religion led him to the apprehension of the Absolute from the perspective of the relative He evolved a Christian Ethic by a systematic reflection on the Christian "myths" of Creation, the Fall and Atonement From the Gospel message, he derived love and justice as the focal points of social ethics The author admits that in the light of events like that of the war in Vietnam, Christian Realism has come to seem more a part of the problem than a part of the solution "It has been criticized not only for lacking any genuinely prophetic insight into these events, but also for sponsoring the policies that led to them" (p 12)

Christianity in Latin America appears as a part of the legacy of Spanish colonialism But the Gospel message also provided the inspiration for "conscientization' (conscience raising) and the formation of "basic communities" which are supposed to play an educative role in the process of liberation In fact, Liberation Theology seeks to present a distinctively religious legitimation for the human aspiration for liberation. Its method is a "critical reflection on praxis" While admitting the relevance of Liberation Theology to the Latin American situation, the author tries to bring out its limitations. He finds a fundamental ambiguity in Gustavo Gutiérrez's correlation of "salvation" and "liberation" This leads to the identification of the "People of God" with the "Poor of Yahweh", or of the Church with the oppressed. A "popular

Continued on p 72. See also pp 86, 90, 94

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Editorial

The Extraordinary Synod

In a surprise move reminiscent of the 1959 convocation of the second Vatican Council by John XXIII, the present Pope, convoked, from the same place St Paul's Outside the Walls and exactly 26 years later on the feast of the Conversion of St Paul, an extraordinary synod of bishops from all over the world to reflect on the implementation of the Council.

The nature and purpose of an extraordinary synod is thus spelled out in the new Code of Canon Law. "The synod of Bishops meeting in extraordinary general assembly for the purpose of dealing with matters which require speedy resolution, is comprised, for the most part, of Bishops who, by reason of the office they hold, are designated by the special law of the synod, others are appointed directly by the Roman Pontiff Added to these are some members of clerical religious institutes, elected in accordance with the same law" (c 346 § 2). This legislation derives from the rules of the Synod framed by Paul VI and published on December 8th, 1966 (cf. CLERGY MONTHLY 36, 1969, p 82) This is not the first extraordinary synod. In December 1969 Paul VI convoked one for October 1970 for the purpose of ensuring a better exercise of episcopal collegiality, fruitful contacts and co-operation between the episcopal conferences and the Holy See and between the episcopal conferences among themselves. When twenty years ago, in September 1965, Paul VI surprised the church and the world at the opening of the last session of the council by instituting the structure of the Synod toward which the Council had been groping (cf CLERGY MONTHLY 29, 1965, pp. 441-446), the move was hailed as a historic event meant to give operational expression to the basic conciliar insight of collegiality.

This time the calling of the extraordinary synod has been somewhat distorted in the reports of the secular media. There can be no doubt about John Paul II's commitment to the objectives of renewal as spelt out in the documents and basic thrust of the Vatican Council.

What he wants now is more solid implementation. In fact in convoking the Synod he stressed that he wanted the church to "relive in some way the extraordinary atmosphere of ecclesial communion" experienced during the Council and "to foster a further deepening and acceptance of Vatican II in the life of the church, specially in the light of the new demands. Thus the synod will be a kind of conciliar "revival" to use the word of Mgr Tomko, permanent Secretary General of the Synod. This will be done through an exchange of experiences and information regarding the application of the Council in various parts of the world It should be a real hearing of "what the Spirit says to the churches" (Rev 2 7ff)

Whatever doubts one might have about the likely outcome of such a meeting, it seems to us that this move should be welcomed by all The synod will create the conditions for a much needed collegial reflexion at this moment of crisis in the church It is no secret that the actual working of the synods, specially the last two or three, left many people in the church dissatisfied The excessive Roman fear and the control it exercises on the institution itself have prevented it from becoming what was its main objective as foreseen at the council, to be a true organ of episcopal corresponsability and collegial government This issue needs to be looked into if the implementation of one of the main objectives of Vatican II has to be fostered, and one may suggest that even the legislation about the synod enshrined in the new code could perhaps be improved to ensure that the Synod achieves its basic intention

Furthermore, it is no secret either that in recent months there has been a quasi confrontation between local hierarchies and the central organs of the church On the occasion of the Pope's visit to Canada the hierarchy there made an unambiguous affirmation of their own responsibility in the concrete planning and organising of the visit and in the preparation of the liturgies that accompanied it In the well publicised Boff affair two Brazilian cardinals stood by the theologian in his "dialogue" with the President of the S Congregation for Doctrine and Faith The Peruvian bishops summoned to Rome for a special visit, rejected a prepared document condemning the liberation theology of Gustavo Gutierrez and issued from Lima, and not from Rome, a much more balanced statement There have been divergence of opinions and positions between the North American bishops and certain Roman circles regarding the pastoral on nuclear disarmament issued in 1983 (cf VIDYAJYOTI, August 1984, pp. 334-336) and regarding the life and involvement of the religious women there. More recently, complaints have been aired that the re-introduction

of the Pius V Mass as an option in the church was done by Rome against the views of a vast majority of the world episcopate.

That there should be divergences of opinion and outlook in such a vast, world-wide organism as the church should surprise no one and may rather be a sign of that maturity of Christian responsibility to which the second Vatican Council has contributed not a little. But the extraordinary synod later this year should be an occasion to clear up some of these misunderstandings between the particular churches and the See which, in the words of the early second century St Ignatius, "is worthy of the purity (of the Gospel) and presides over the charity". The Synod could offer a good opportunity to exercise that mutual accountability which is the sign of a mature charity, and to evolve guidelines for a more effective functioning of authentic corresponsibility in the church, both at the time of the regular synods and in the ordinary administration. Instead of being a move to increase the centralisation in the church, the synod could help the universal church to develop new ways in which it would wish the Petrine charism of unity to be exercised in the twentieth century We think that other churches will be watching this particular meeting to be reassured that the charism of unity in the church is not destructive of its authentic catholicity On this the future of the ecumenical movement may depend. And for us in India, we may hope that the experience of corresponsibility in the synod and the reflection on the main orientations of Vatican II may offer new insights to our church leaders to seek an authentic pastoral and christian solution to the tensions arising from the richness and plurality of christian traditions within the community.

One of the break-throughs of the Council was undoubtedly its ecumenical dimension, made evident both by the presence of our separated brethren in the Council Hall and by the clear teaching it issued regarding ecumenism and the oriental churches It will not be possible to relive the conciliar experience without this presence of other churches in the synod. One would hope that invitations to participate in this ecclesial event will be sent to leaders of the orthodox churches and of those deriving from the reformation. As this is an "extraordinary synod", by law more restricted in numbers than an ordinary synod but also more flexible and called for matters which require "speedy resolution", we would think that this is the appropriate forum to demand from the Christian world a greater urgency and speed in moving towards inter-communion as a step to organic unity. This synod could also be an appropriate organ to give an official Catholic answer to the Lima agreement which the Faith and Order

commission of the World Council of Churches has sent to all churches regarding our common faith in relation to Baptism, the Eucharist and the Ministry in the church. The document, it will be recalled, was worked out with full participation of the Vatican-appointed Catholic members of the commission and shows a great sensitivity towards the Catholic theological position. There are also other ecumenical documents of bilateral conversations between the Roman and other churches that could well come in for consideration and response from the Catholic episcopate. At least an outline of the official response to these documents, where indicated, could be proposed by the synod, because, with the very little time allotted to it, one frankly cannot see how it will be able to go through a meaningful agenda.

The synod is an expression of the world-wide catholicity of the church, but it cannot replace the function and responsibility of the local churches in translating the Gospel life into the concrete cultures of the world. Hence the synod could and should be a moment of reaffirmation of the rich catholicity of the church.

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This issue focuses on some fundamental questions of our faith. Fr M. AMALADOSS proposes a model for a theology of religions and the meeting of faiths that emerges from an experience of inter-religious dialogue. Fr F. KERR, O.P., gives an evaluation of Hans Küng's book on the existence of God which incorporates much of Western philosophical and theological thought in the last centuries. From Czechoslovakia Mr L. HEJDANEK, an outstanding Christian committed to the Church and the defence of human rights, reflects on how an apologia for the faith is made credible only by an attitude of repentance and courageous commitment to the Gospel values on the part of Christians. And Fr S.J. EMMANUEL from Srilanka introduces the topic of next year's ordinary synod, the Laity, on which we shall come back in these pages.

Faith Meets Faith

M. AMALADOSS, S.J.

IN the field of dialogue with other religions the last twenty years have been a period of growth and discovery. Twenty years ago I studied Hindu religion and culture so that I can present Christ to the Hindus in a way more adapted to their mentality. Later I tried to discover the "unknown Christ of Hinduism" so that I may make the Hindus recognize the Christ I preach to them as their own, but further fulfilling their deeper aspirations. Today I dialogue with my Hindu brothers, looking forward to mutual enrichment and collaboration in the building up of a new humanity Rather than chronicle this history, which many of you may have shared, it would be more useful to look into the situation in which I find myself today.

The Indian Experience

One of the striking characteristics of contemporary Indian experience is social, cultural and religious pluralism India is the cradle of two great world religions Hinduism and Buddhism. It is the third largest Islamic country in the world with about 75 million Muslims. Christians are a minority of 15 million All are living together in a secular democracy. Occasional inter-religious clashes notwithstanding, India has a long tradition of tolerance in the field of religion This tolerance has led neither to syncretism nor to indifference. Rather, it has been experienced as commitment to one's roots and respect for the other. How do I experience this situation as a Christian, in the light of my faith ?

I have grown to respect Hinduism I have met their holy men, admired their rich spiritual experience and learnt from them. Men of action like Mahatma Gandhi inspire me. I have read their scriptures and these have nourished my prayer and reflection I have touched God in their deeply religious symbols and artistic creations in music, dance, sculpture and devotional literature. Not that these have not mingled with defects, imperfections, mistakes and even superstitions. But I can still reach out to the authentic with a discerning eye. I cannot but see God's hand here, revealing, inviting, loving and giving

himself. I find here an act of God who wishes to save all men (1 Tim 2 4). I cannot prove this to you. But I can invite you to share the experience.

Signs of the Times

Christianity has been in my country for 20 centuries. It has remained a largely 'foreign' religion. In India, as in the rest of Asia, it has not made much headway in the face of other great religions like Hinduism. On the contrary, renewal movements are giving a new life to Hinduism Christianity, however, seems to be becoming a minority even in the so-called Christian countries I no longer dream of a time when the whole world will be Christian Here, certainly, there is a 'sign of the time' that provokes thought

Another 'sign of the time' is the influence that Christ has had in India independently, and even in spite, of Christianity The Gospels are read, Christ is respected as a great guru. Men like Gandhi have claimed, with credibility, to follow his teachings.

There are also new perspectives in the theology of religions and evangelization I do not believe any longer that a Hindu, unless he professes faith in Christ, will be damned to hell fire I believe not only that he will be saved if he is true to his conscience, but that he experiences God in and through the symbols and structures of his religion I believe that these religions are not mere human efforts to reach God but are also means through which God reaches down to man, though there may be much that is human limitation and even sin I see evangelization as saving not merely man's soul, but the whole man Socio-economic and human development become integral parts of evangelization In this task of building up a new humanity, I see other religions, not as enemies, but as allies and co-workers offering a religious dimension to people's quest for fulness of life Dialogue with other religions is a necessary complement to proclamation

The Problem

In this context of religious pluralism, is proclaiming Christ as the only Name in which all men find salvation and calling for discipleship through baptism into the Church still meaningful ? The usual answer is: Even those who belong to other religions are saved by Christ, though unknown to them. The other religions have only the 'seeds of the Word', whereas the Church has the Word, evangelization therefore is an invitation to awareness and fulfilment, God calls all men to this fulness.

This answer looks attractive. But then I meet similar absolute claims from other religions. For example, Lord Krishna, believed by Hindus to be God in human form, tells his devotee Arjuna: "Even those who are devotees of other Gods, and worship them with faith, they also sacrifice to me alone, though not according to the law" (*Bhagavad Gitā* IX: 23). Dialogue between religions in such a situation becomes a clash of absolutes, seeking to relativize each other.

On the other hand, the Second Vatican Council has made me aware of the Church as a pilgrim Church, whose perception, expression and living of its faith is not only historically conditioned and limited, but also made defective by human weakness and sin. Faced with other religions, unwilling to be triumphalistic, I start wondering whether I can really sustain the claim of the Church to be the repository of the fulness of truth, especially when I discover in other religions areas of truth and experience that are not too obvious in my own. This doubt makes me rethink my claims and leads me to become aware of a whole series of simplifications that I normally make.

Some Clarifications

First of all I see that I tend to identify the visible Church and the Kingdom. The Kingdom is an eschatological reality, which is present and active in the world today, but which will reach full realization only on the last day. And we do not know what form this realization will take Even this limited and growing reality of the Kingdom is not identified with the Church, but is as wide as the presence and activity of the Spirit in the world The Church is the Sacrament of the Kingdom — that is to say, it is a real symbolic mediation of it, but it is not identified with it The other religions are also, for that matter, symbolic mediations in their own way. The inter-relationships between the different symbolic mediations may be complex. I shall propose a few models later But claims of fulness on behalf of the Church can hardly be maintained.

Secondly, today I no longer identify the Church with Christ and claim for it prerogatives that are normally due to Christ — for instance, the unique and universal mediatorship. But I do tend to oversimplify the complex reality of the God-Man and the eschatological nature of his mystery. The mystery of the Word is cosmic: it is there since the beginning of the world and will be till the last day, working in the world in various ways and leading it to fulness and completion. The Word becoming flesh in Jesus takes on a limitation in history.

This manifestation is not the same as the manifestation of the Word in creation or at the end of time. I tend to confuse the Jesus of history with the cosmic Christ. I use too easily words like final, ultimate with regard to Jesus (in a sense of realized eschatology) instead of using them about the cosmic Christ in a truly eschatological sense To understand the unique relationship between the cosmic Christ and the Jesus of history may be as difficult as to understand the mystery of the incarnation, of the God-Man But I need not identify them, much less confuse them.

A Vision

Keeping these clarifications in mind I can now try to outline an overall vision in the context of which specific problems can be considered God has a plan for the world He wants to bring together all things in a new heaven and a new earth. He wishes to unite all men in a community of love, freedom and justice He is revealing and realising this plan by sharing his own life with men through the Word and the Spirit. This self-communication of God is taking place in the world through a great variety of symbolic mediations but the goal is always the same the building up of a new humanity of freedom, fellowship and justice The various religions, and even secular movements, are at the service of this plan of God for the world This is true of Jesus and more particularly of the Church

Jesus is aware of a special relationship - a unique one - with God's plan The Church continues the work of Jesus and affirms this special relationship of Jesus. It is called to a twofold service one is to witness to the Kingdom and to promote its realisation in the world, another is to proclaim Jesus and to build up a community of disciples The second is a means of serving the first In doing the first service the Church discovers that the mystery of God is active everywhere, in various ways It has no claims to exclusivity It discovers a community of faith It is called to dialogue and to collaborate It makes its specific contribution to the integral wholeness of the Kingdom

In proclaiming Jesus it sets itself apart It witnesses to its specific faith It welcomes those whom God calls to this fellowship and who freely decide to commit themselves This commitment is no title for honour or superiority, it is a call for a special service.

Dialogue and proclamation are integral aspects of evangelization which is building up the Kingdom

Some Models

In the context of this broad vision how do I look at the relationship between the religions ? I start with the understanding that all religions are faith-commitments leading to the same goal. Each religion has its faith vision, and tends to place itself at the centre. But no one religion can claim a superior vision that will reconcile all visions in a general order No single vision can claim to discern in advance the emerging patterns of inter-relationships in the movement towards fulness. This is God's secret. Within these parameters, how do I see the relationship between religions ? I shall examine some models that have been proposed and then propose one of my own.

The first model is that of a growing organism. The believer who thinks that his own religion is the most perfect sees it growing by integrating whatever is true and good in other religions This does happen when a great religion encounters smaller popular and tribal religions, which eventually lose their separate identity. But this is not the way two great religions relate to each other They may learn from each other and grow But one will not eliminate the others. This is a one-sided and inadequate model to understand religious pluralism.

The next model is at the opposite end of the spectrum. The various religions are like different names for one and the same reality They are the same This model simply denies the existence of pluralism It is contrary to experience

A model, very commonly used in India among the Hindus, is that religions are like different rivers leading to the same ocean The goal is the same The ways are different Each religion perceives different aspects of the same God This model is inadequate. Religions are thought of as parallel lines that never eventually meet. There is no common perspective There is no mutual influence, no convergence. There is no need for dialogue Conversion is meaningless

A fourth model sees religions as different colours of a spectrum emerging out of a ray of white light refracted through a prism. The prism is man's experience. The different lights are different refractions. But they merge into each other. This model points to a certain inter-relationship. But it sees religions as parts of one totality. It tries to show the origin of religious differences, it does not say how these differences could be overcome. That would need another prism !

Another model that has been proposed is that of languages. All the languages refer to the same reality. Each language is a particular way of looking at the world. They may refer to the same reality, but not in the same way. They arise out of different symbolic worlds. Translation from one language to another is possible, but not always easy. There is a community of experience, perceived and expressed through different symbol systems. This model accounts both for the differences and for the community. But it makes religions, like languages, human and cultural phenomena. God's call and man's faith commitment find no place in this model.

The Community Model

The model that I find interesting is a group of people called to build a community. All of them share this common vocation and are aware of it. Each has his or her special talent or charism that he or she places at the service of the community. The charism is felt to be a gift from God and a mission. Each one has his or her contribution to make and operates from his or her perspective. But the community is built up only when all collaborate and pool together their charisms. Becoming aware of God's call and gift in the context of the community and committing oneself to God and the community is an element of the process. An analogous model is that of the religious congregations and other groups in the Church. Each congregation represents a charism that indicates a special type or area of service. They are all at the service of the Church and the world. For the sake of efficient service each congregation propagates its ideals and recruits personnel who are considered at the same time people specially called by God. To each group its vocation is a specific realisation of the baptismal commitment of every Christian. But one respects the call and the commitment of the other. One is open to collaborate. One praises and thanks God for the richness and variety of his gifts. One is open to the other not merely for purposes of working together but also to learn from each other's perspectives and experience towards mutual enrichment. They converge towards the building up of the community of the Church, and of the world.

Religion is not primarily a body of doctrines, a set of rituals or a code of conduct. Religions are groups of people who have heard the call of God and who have responded to him in faith commitment. They are all aware that the call is not a personal privilege, but a mission to build up the community of people. This common awareness invites them to dialogue, to listen to each other, to learn from each other to discover their basic community and

complementarity. Each one grows by integrating the riches of the other. But their common task is not to build up each other but the community. But this community does not ask them to sacrifice their individuality. Community does not demand uniformity. The rich variety of pluralism is a gift of God to the world. Variety is the wealth of his creativity.

Where Do I Stand ?

How do I situate myself in the context of this vision ? God has revealed to me the Mystery operative in the world Its dimensions are as wide as the world and the modes of its operation are diverse. I believe that the mystery is in a special way linked to Jesus. But I have learnt from experience that commitment to Jesus in the Church is not precondition to participation in the mystery. God calls all men to participate in his plan for salvation He calls some to the Church. With every one I am called to build up a new humanity. With those who are called to faith in Jesus I build up a community of disciples.

Building up the Kingdom is the primary mission of the Church and dialogue with other religions is a means towards this goal The Church is called not to build itself up, but to serve, to give itself in total self-gift in imitation of Jesus himself Just as Jesus died in order to rise to new life I am open to the possibility that the Church is called to die too that the world may live — and this is true of all religions This death is not destruction but gives birth to a new and fuller life

Dialogue between Religions

What does dialogue between religions mean in practice ? A meeting of South Asian Bishops in 1982 on Dialogue with Hinduism has this to say.

> Dialogue promotes mutual understanding and enrichment through common prayer, sharing of experience and reflection In this way we deepen not only our common realisation of the truth, but also our common commitment to assure a religious dimension to people's quest for a fuller life of peace in freedom, fellowship and justice . Since the religions, as the Church, are at the service of the world, inter-religious dialogue cannot be confined to the religious sphere but must embrace all dimensions of life, economic, socio-political, cultural and religious. It is in their common commitment to the fuller life of the human community that they discover their complementarity and the urgency and relevance of dialogue at all levels, socio-economic and intellectual as well as spiritual, among the common people in daily life as among scholars and people with deep religious experience.

An Indian Example

Taking Hinduism and Christianity in India today I envisage a project such as the following: Both have positive elements and drawbacks. They complement and correct each other in the service of the Indian people.

At the economic level, the cosmic concern and the integral humanism characteristic of Hinduism with the Christian emphasis on the social and structural dimensions of religious commitment can create a positive atmosphere for the struggle for justice against such evils as the feudalism strengthened by the caste system, the fatalism leading to passivity and the acosmism of Hinduism as well as the Christian tendency to privatize and ritualize religion and its easy acceptance of the status quo

At the social level, the values of freedom and fellowship in Christ can promote a radical humanism This is also affirmed in Hinduism by the awareness of the presence of the Absolute in each individual and strengthened by contemporary social reformers like Gandhi and Tagore Hinduism and Christianity can jointly free people from the various social stratifications that keep them enslaved.

At the psychological level, the Hindu tradition of inter-dependence and mutual solidarity, fostered by social institutions like the joint-family, can lead to attitudes of conformism and introversion Christ's new cammand to love the other even unto death can challenge such attitudes and lead to a radical transformation of society On the other hand Christianity can acquire a greater sense of community and participation

Wholeness and Order, characteristic of the general and classical Hindu culture, as seen in its arts, for example, may counter the various dualisms which Christianity in India has inherited and lead to the healing of various alienations of contemporary Indian society.

At the religious level Indian interiority will complement the Christian experience of a personal encounter with God in terms of love and commitment While contemporary Christianity seeks to emphasize liberating action, Hinduism emphasizes experiential realization of God through various ways or *mārgas* The principle of suitability in spiritual practice in India encourages a pluralistic approach to spiritual realization. Christianity can make Hinduism realize the social dimension of spirituality and the community dimension of salvation.

In this manner Hinduism and Christianity can build up together a new heaven and a new earth in India. As a Christian, I continue to witness to Jesus and his Good News and welcome disciples who feel called by God to join the fellowship and freely choose to do so. I think that my dialogue with people of other religions contributes to the growth of all in their own faith commitments as well as in their commitment to the Kingdom. I feel called to work together with all men of good will for the coming of this Kingdom, so that God may be all in all (1 Cor 15: 28).

Küng's Case for God

Fergus KERR O.P.

PEOPLE would like to have reasons for believing that God exists. Hans Küng's *Does God Exist?* certainly looks like the most thorough and scholarly treatment of the subject[1] The translation by Edward Quinn, is, needless to say, almost faultless. Some of the reviews which the hardback version received were very destructive — Alasdair MacIntyre's page-long diatribe in *The London Review of Books* (5 18 February, 1981) comes to mind "Whenever in future I try to imagine what Purgatory will be like, the thought of having to read Dr Küng's book will recur" Judgements in some of the theological periodicals were rather more respectful To give only two examples: in *Theology* (September 1981), after some gently expressed but actually quite devastating criticisms, Brian Hebblethwaite concludes as follows: "So it can hardly be said that this is a great book But as an attempt to set the scene for a serious engagement with atheism, it serves a very useful purpose". In *The Month* (March 1981), while describing Hans Küng as "a sort of Dale Carnegie of modern theology, building confidence, edifying in the best sense of the word", Paul Lakeland's judgment of the book runs thus "He has two ostensible purposes, to present the history of thinking about the problem of God since the time of Descartes, and to define a new concept of God The former he does without any great originality This reviewer's point is, in fact, that Küng's argument for God's existence is boringly orthodox -"there is really nothing here to bring even the suggestion of a blush to the cheek of the most demurely Roman theologian".

That may well be the case Küng's theology and recent Holy Office declarations feed off each other in a way that suggests that these great adversaries are equally indebted to the ultramontane neoscholastic tradition Brian Hebblethwaite refers to Küng's "remarkable communicational and apologetic success". No doubt the Küngian shenanigans have greatly increased sales — he must be the most widely read theologian alive His publishers certainly exploit his reputation:

1 *Does God Exist? An Answer for Today* By Hans KÜNG London, Collins 1980 Pp xxiv+839 £ 12.00 There is also a paperback edition by Collins Fount Paperbacks, 1980 £ 5.95 This review article is reprinted from NEW BLACKFRIARS 65 (May 1984), pp 226-231, by kind permission of the editor.

"one of the most brilliant, controversial and outspoken priests in the Roman Catholic Church this century". But beyond the ecclesiastical showbiz there remains something in Küng's apologetics for Christianity that makes sense to many thoughtful Catholics. Partly, it must be the element of liberal Protestantism in his work that attracts them (and, makes Alasdair MacIntyre very angry: "the simple fact, albeit one that he himself has not yet noticed, is that Dr. Küng. . is quite clearly a Protestant"). Even more deeply, however, it is perhaps the Cartesian philosophy that confuses people. That is at least one possible reason for the success of *Does God Exist* ? that deserves a little exploration.

The book falls into seven sections. In the first, Descartes and Pascal are presented with detailed attention to their setting in seventeenth-century Catholicism. As everyone knows, Descartes was soldiering on the Danube in 1619 when he had his vision of mathematically certain systematization of knowledge, both of nature and of mind. Fewer know that he immediately vowed to make a pilgrimage to Loreto — and that he actually made it. Everybody knows that Pascal hated the Jesuits — Küng says that the *Lettres Provinciales* prepared the way for the papal dissolution of the Society a century later. What is less familiar is the interplay between Descartes and the much younger Pascal They met in 1647, over a few days, but did not become friends Pascal, according to Küng, was so much more critical and sceptical than Descartes that he could not rest with the notion that the rational self-certainty of the human subject alone provided the firm, unshakeable foundation on which all certainty — including the certainty of God's existence — might be built Küng's thesis is that Pascal's existential sense of the radical insecurity of human life is far more troublesome than Cartesian anxieties about locating secure foundations for human knowledge. Scepticism about the reality of anything, inside or outside human consciousness, becomes the baseline for Küng's whole enterprise. He insists that, while we cannot go back on Cartesian rationality, we have to acknowledge, with Pascal, the need for feeling and choice — "*Il faut parier*", you have to wager.

The second section of the book introduces Hegel It culminates with Teilhard de Chardin and the so-called "process theology" of A.N Whitehead There is no going back on the Hegelian insight either -- which is, apparently, that God "is alive and active in history", not one who "persists unmoving and unchanging in an unhistorical or suprahistorical sphere" (page 188) The third section, accordingly, deals with *one* result of putting God firmly into history: the atheism of Feuerbach, Marx, and then Freud. But the key move in Küng's book come in the fourth section, which is entirely devoted to Nietzsche.

"It is certain", wrote Bernard Williams recently (*The London Review of Books*, 4-17 June 1981), "even if not everyone has yet come to see it, that Nietzsche was the greatest moral philosopher of the past century". His reason is as follows: "This was, above all, because he saw how totally problematical morality, as understood over many centuries, has become, and how complex a reaction that fact, when fully understood, requires". He goes on to give this fine summary of Nietzsche's whole work: "To help himself to understand it, he resourcefully explored, in twenty years of increasingly hectic activity, our feelings about art, guilt, violence, honesty, and indeed every element of that moral consciousness which the Greeks helped to invent". *That* is the Nietzsche, then, whom an Anglo-Saxon philosopher finds worth reading. The coherence of the moral sensibility which we have inherited may depend on certain "theological" conceptions which Nietzsche's gift for suspicion detected. But, although Küng insists on how much Christians have to learn from Nietzsche, his main emphasis is on the grandiloquent nihilism rather than on the detailed psychological and social-anthropological probings. He presents Nietzsche's nihilism as *the* great alternative to the modern theism for which he is arguing. In fact, it is very much the picture that those who know little or nothing about Nietzsche would expect: "It is a serious possibility that reality is lacking in reality". It is indeed at least possible that this human life, in the last resort, is meaningless, that chance, blind fate, chaos, illusion rule the world, that, in the last resort, everything is contradictory, meaningless, worthless, null" (page 423). This is a serious possibility, so Küng says, because of the *Zweifelhaftigkeit* of reality: "the utter dubiousness of all that exist". Thus we turn to the radical scepticism introduced by Descartes and Pascal.

In the fifth section, then, we seem all poised to deflect Nietzsche's nihilism. At this point anyone familiar with Wittgenstein's endlessly imaginative explorations of the allurements of scepticism would expect Küng to cut straight through the absurdities of the Cartesian-Pascalian line. The passage would not be swift. A first-year student could trot out the arguments against Cartesianism, but it takes time to free oneself from the inveterate desire to found everything upon self-evident principles, atomic propositions, protocol statements, or anything you like *so long as it is in our minds*. After all, even the much-revered Donald Davidson thinks that we can make sense of things only against a background of *beliefs*[2]. It is going to be *decisions* that Küng will favour. We have to *choose* the "basic attitude" which it is up to

2 See "The Method of Truth in Metaphysics", *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, II, 1977, p. 244.

the individual to "adopt" vis-a-vis this utterly dubious reality with which one is surrounded. He explicitly distances himself from Sartrian existentialism but writes as follows all the same: "Every human being decides for himself his *fundamental attitude* to reality: that basic approach which embraces, colours, characterizes his whole experience, behaviour, action" (page 432). One option is Nietzsche's nihilism — you just *decide* that reality is senseless. The alternative, the only other possibility, is *Grundvertrauen*: fundamental trust in the reality of the world around me. I *choose* to be confident of the reality of other people and all the rest of the furniture on the stage of life. It is a "radical decision" that I have to make "about my life in the world". Allusion is made to Kierkegaard's "Either/Or" as well as to St Ignatius of Loyola's *electio* (page 348); but this liberty to choose one's reaction to reality is expounded mainly with reference to Popper, Carnap, T.S. Kuhn, and others who have encouraged Küng to think that it is all a matter of our *decision* From Popper he has learnt that "all rational thinking rests on a choice, a resolution, a decision, an attitude" (page 461). From Carnap he has learnt that the principles and rules of argument in an artificial language are a matter of "free choice" (ibid). From Wittgenstein (via Carnap, citing Schlick) he has learnt, even more amazingly, "that the rules of language may be chosen with complete freedom" (ibid) From Kuhn, finally, he has learnt that there can be no science but for prior "commitments" — "beliefs in particular models" (ibid) All along the line, the suggestion is that we are free to choose our beliefs about the intelligibility and even the reality of the world around us. This is surely where the charm of Kung's argument lies

In the sixth section the argument comes to a head — "as there is no logically conclusive proof for the reality of reality, neither is there one for the reality of God" (page 574) Belief in the existence of God is a "basic decision" — indeed it is an *Urentscheidung* (that sounds a lot more impressive) — on analogy with the "basic decision for the reality of reality as a whole" (*sic*) In other words, there is nothing irrational about believing in the reality of God — after all, we have nothing better than belief to go on vis-a-vis the reality of the world around us. It is not very odd for us to have nothing better than trust upon which to found our belief in the existence of God — for we have nothing better than trust at the basis of our belief in the reality of the external world !

In the final section of this exceedingly long and prolix book this God whose reality has thus been less than conclusively proved turns out, after a detour through the many names of God in Chinese religion

etc., to be the Christian God. Here Küng rejoins *On Being a Christian*, his earlier book, large chunks of which are indeed recycled.

There is much interesting matter in the book: how could there fail to be? One is grateful for the reference to Hoimar von Ditfurth's "widely read book", *Im Anfang war der Wasserstoff* (page 638). It appears that H Reiner showed some thirty years ago that the usual tale about the appearance of the word "metaphysics" is a legend (page 775). It is valuable to be reminded of Karl Barth's discussion of Descartes (in CD III/1) It is surprising to hear that he very seldom mentions Pascal. It is even more valuable to learn of Barth's silent retraction on the subject of natural theology (CD IV/3) There are interesting pages on how fundamental trust in the reality of the world depends on certain psychosomatic conditions, and indeed begins in the womb (page 454 ff) In fact, it is surely because so many people, in our society at least, have such deep misgivings about the reality of the world around them, and particularly about the reliability of other people, that the anxieties so powerfully articulated by Descartes and Pascal remain at the centre of philosophical attention But it is just as clear that it does not lie in anyone's power simply to *decide* to trust in the reality of the world which means, in turn, that we have to find some other model for belief in the existence of God The analogy on which Kung's argument depends that we decide to trust the reality of the external world is a piece of nonsense But the question remains — why should anyone be tempted by the idea that we *believe* in the existence of the world around us? Why should a perfectly literate and intelligent reviewer in *The Month* conclude that Kung's case for the existence of God is so orthodox as to be boring?

The panoply of references only displays Hans Küng's unfamiliarity with good philosophy As Alasdair MacIntyre noted, he knows nothing of the work on the question of God's existence by a generation of Anglo-Saxon philosophers of religion.[3] Much more serious, however, is his ignorance of the anti-Cartesianism which they take for granted But this is where he is joined by many thoughtful Catholics (and others) The idea that it is up to us to decide how to take the world has great plausibility It is easy to fill out the picture of the Self, or even of the whole huddled tribe, confronting that which surrounds it and judging whether it is as it seems, or even whether it is there at all. There seems to be a standpoint from which we survey the passing show and impose a pattern upon it More sophisticatedly, mathematics seems a free creation, 'language only a matter of convention; and so on. All

[3] MacIntyre lists Robert M Adams, Peter Geach, Anthony Kenny, Terence Penelhum, Alvin Plantinga, James Ross and Richard Swinburne.

along the line, it looks as if our experience of reality depends on our interpretation — and our interpretation is supposed to be, in the last resort, our decision. It is what happens *inside our heads* that matters. And then delusions occur. Many people are schizophrenic. Some people inhabit their own private world. Nietzsche thought that truth is the fiction that the race needs, biologically, to make this alien planet habitable. People do lose confidence in one another. As babies people do have their belief in other people's reliability irreparably undermined. People have to be drilled and drugged to get back into relationships with others. And so on. That, and much else, is the sort of thing that sustains the thought that it is finally up to us to decide how to react to reality. Once the ramifications of this thought begin to surface its power becomes intelligible.

According to Hans Kung, we cannot *prove* that the external world exists, has meaning, etc., we just have to make an act of faith that it does. On the whole, this act of faith will prove worth it. The gamble will pay off in interesting ways But it is always possible to go the allegedly Nietzschean way and to take things for the chaotic mess they often seem to be This will have bleak effects — but Küng thinks it is always *possible*. He is held captive by the picture of the man who is free to put what construction he wills upon the surrounding world. Of course there is room for deciding to trust a man who has let one down — but there is no option about his being a human being. In innumerable situations human beings react to one another in that collaborative enterprise which is any community or culture — and there is no room for doubt about what they are at It has nothing to do with decisions or conventions or beliefs, shared and communicable or otherwise — it is "a consensus of *action*· a consensus of doing the same thing, reacting in the same way We all act the same way, walk the same way, count the same way"[4] But that directs our attention to certain very general facts of nature, psychological and physical — to exigencies of conduct and feeling which human beings share Wittgenstein's discovery (it has been well said) is "of the depth of convention in human life, a discovery which insists not only on the conventionality of human society but, we could say, on the conventionality of human nature itself"[5]. But Hans Küng is not the only theologian who would avoid Wittgenstein's writings.

4. See *Wittgenstein's Lectures*, edited by Cora Diamond, p. 184
5. See Stanley Cavell, *The Claim of Reason*, p. 111.

The Relevance of Christianity Today

Letter to a Friend

Ladislav HEJDANEK*

DEAR Friend,

There is a good deal of scepticism in your question: Is there still a place, a positive role, a prospect for religion and Christianity in present day society, and not only in our country but in the world at large? I will add a further question, one which was put to me not so long ago by a marxist in an open and sincere way In the context of the struggle for the fundamental human rights can there be any positive meaning in putting particular emphasis on religious freedom? In reality what matters is the freedom of opinion in general, whether this opinion has to do with religion or not The world has changed and religion no longer plays an important role. When the Christians demand that their voices be heard, they are just pleading in their own interests Christians are not particularly heard demanding freedom and rights for the others this has never been their strong point.

I feel that an authentic Christian cannot answer such questions, or rather reproaches, by defending or pleading for Christianity and the Christians If there is anyone who should be painfully aware of his faults and failings it is indeed the Christian This does not mean that the Christian is (or should be) better than "the others" — on the contrary, we learn from experience that he is prone to the same faults He can and must know them better, and in any case he should not minimise or underrate them, or ever try to justify them If he does this he pretends to be a Christian without being one, because he has understood nothing of what constitutes the essence of the Gospel For this very reason we

*The philosopher Ladislav HEJDANEK was a member of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren one of the first signatories of the Charter of 77, and the spokesman of this movement from September 1977 to February 1979 In February 1977 he began writing texts in the form of personal letters the copies of which were passed on in the samizdat They are reflections philosophical or political in character, or commentaries on current events, specially on the problems in the movement for the defence of human rights and of citizens in general He was arrested in January 1978 (cf *Istina* 24 (1979), pp 278-9) The letter published here has a permanent value for Christians and was published in a French version in *Istina* 28 (1983) pp 65-70 The English version is done for VIDYAJYOTI by Fr Richard LASAGE, S.J.

should be suspicious of a Christian who speaks against an evil or condemns an abuse or injustice and at the same time puts on the lofty airs of a just arbiter, as if he has nothing to do with that situation or is free from fault or any involvement in the creation of the evil denounced. The same holds good when, beyond the personal level, he tries to clear his Church, or Christianity in general, from any responsibility. The Christian cannot take the liberty of uttering the least word of accusation until he has made clear, privately and publicly, to himself and to others, that there is a participation of his Church and Christianity at large in the fault denounced. I am convinced that it is this only that makes the role of the Christians absolutely necessary and irreplaceable, even in our modern society and "a-religious world". If for some reason the Christians wish to back out and escape from this task, they cease to be Christians and make of themselves and the Church the "salt which has lost its flavour" and which is only good to be thrown out into the famous dustbin of history and to be trampled upon by men.

And so, in the struggle for the civic and fundamental human rights, the Christians have another function than that of being part of the oppressed and persecuted groups in our society. In no case whatever do they have the right to display their wounds and bruises and complain of being more ill-treated than the others. First of all, it is not true. And even if it were, they still would have no right to complain. Their task is entirely different Christians have to examine their own conscience and ask themselves in what way as Christians and as members of their Churches (not only as private individuals), they are themselves accomplices in this oppression and persecution. They have to go deep down into their conscience and ask themselves what is their relationship in the other persecuten and oppressed persons and groups. In the Gospels and especially in the Sermon on the Mount, it is said very clearly that what is decisive in human life is what we do for the hungry and thirsty (by this, material hunger and thirst are primarily understood, but the interpretation which sees a hunger and thirst for justice is nonetheless correct), for the naked and those shivering from cold, for those who have suffered in some way, especially for a just cause, who have been hated and cursed, imprisoned, etc. It is in the person of the poor, the persecuted, the insulted, the suffering, the distressed, the merciful, the despised, that the Christian bears witness to this relationship to Jesus Perhaps we insist too little on the fact that a clear and unequivocal relationship to the hungry and thirsty necessarily leads also to a clear and unequivocal relation to the feasting rich. If my heart is truly on the side of the poor, I will not sponge on the wealthy. If I visit a prisoner (be it in imagination, for our civilisation has made such

progress that visits to prisoners can only be made by relatives, and even then with special permission) I will not feast together with the man who imprisoned him. If I show sympathy towards those who are disgraced and persecuted, I will not give a friendly support to those who disgrace and persecute them. This does not mean that I will repay evil for evil, that I will hate those who hate me and my friends. But he who wishes to sneak away like a lizard, without making enemies, will end up with the goats, and not with the sheep

In this respect, the eminent representatives of the Christian communities and the leading members of the Churches deserve special attention Even if in the case of an unjustly condemned person I may be entitled to make merely polite noises and avoid voicing my disapproval too loudly, I have no right to do this with regard to Church dignitaries who for tactical considerations, out of fear or mere cowardice, out of a mean concern for their own existence, try to legitimize an unjust cause. I have no right to shut my eyes to this matter or allege that it is none of my business to get involved. This is a capitulation, a shameful lie, a treason before which no true Christian can remain indifferent or neutral, and against which no Christian has the right not to protest Many Church representatives, many ordinary priests and pastors, even many lay people will say that I am speaking foolishly and that this would simply mean heading towards the total annihilation of the Church and that we must rather swallow the bitter pill so that the Church may be preserved and live But in so saying they prove that they do not know what Christianity is. The true faith is Chinese to them, and they have not even read the Gospel properly Otherwise they would know that the man who has nothing or little to do with Christianity (the "Samaritan", that is the non-Jew) but who is willing to help another beaten up by robbers and stripped of his clothes - this man is worth a thousand times more than the priest, the leader or even the Church dignitary who notices the poor wretch but goes by hurriedly to fulfil his sacred duties in the temple They would know that only self-sacrifice (not self-preservation) can claim to be Christ-like, that the refusal of this sacrifice comes from Satan ("get behind me", says Jesus to Peter who had advocated this refusal), and that if the grain does not die, it will bear no fruit

Forgive me if this sounds like a sermon with pathetic overtones. But I simply cannot understand how certain Christians are able to justify in their eyes the Church hierarchy and even publicly defend them when they make compromise upon compromise, betray their flock, and give them over as prey to the wolves, or when they remain indifferent to the suffering, the afflicted, the disgraced and the perse-

cated because they do not belong to their flock. Unfortunately I have experienced this in my own Church representatives, as my Catholic brethren in theirs. I believe that such a thing is unjustifiable, that the only possible reaction is to dissent completely, to show early one's disapproval, but above all to propose an alternative, to set out in a different direction. Of course this applies not only to Church representatives and leaders, but also to the popular base on which the fearful dignitaries can take support, and actually do. If I dare make a general statement, I would say that our Churches today have the representatives they deserve. Ordinary Christians who live in self protection and resort to subterfuge, who heap up compromise upon compromise, cannot expect their leaders to be saints We find in our Churches the same diseases which undermine society, except that they take on more ugly and repulsive forms, because they try here to put on a disguise and show a pious face When I look back I am all the more convinced that our social situation would have been different, better and more encouraging, if in the course of the last thirty years all the Christians of our country had behaved as true Christians. But they have given in to the enemy Ten years ago their representatives publicly admitted this Today, however, it is quite common to see the same people, who had then beaten their breasts and repented, do again the same things for which they reproached themselves No one will believe them if they happen to repent a second time And so, they destroy the whole credibility of the Christian message I quite understand it if today you or any one else would have doubts about the future of Christianity, and I will not try to make you change your mind Even I have doubts about the future of the Christians, and their Christian Churches, in our country (especially in our country, although it seems that they are not better off elsewhere) the life of the so called faithful, the life of the Churches is (for the umpteenth time) an enormous corruption I am ashamed each time I think of it The worst infamy is that as soon as there are a few people who take their faith more seriously than others and in so doing end up bringing down misfortune upon themselves, many if not the majority of the other people adopt a prudent attitude of reserve, to escape from the accusation of their own conscience, and nod the head with a knowing look instead of reproving immediately their Church representatives when the latter officially cut themselves off from the courageous Christians. I will never forget the bitter pill I had to swallow (and it was neither the first nor the last in these last years) when Svata Karasek was arrested and tried because he had decided to preach in song after having been forbidden to speak from the pulpit. And when the student Tydlitat mentioned his name in a prayer during the office, he was forced to leave

the faculty of theology! The incredible has become true: a theology student is excluded from the faculty by his professors for having made this little gesture, when they themselves should have done much more. Can these professors hope that they will still be taken seriously when they speak of Christ and the Gospel even if one day they make a self-criticism, even if they confess their sins? And what Christian deeds did we see, what Christian words hear on that occasion from the synod assembly? or from the deans and their chapters, and from all the colleges? Critical views, clear denunciations have been the exception rather than the rule. Of what use is a Church where what is left of Christianity is only commonplace and empty words?

If I were to express an opinion about the future of Christianity, or rather, the faith, according to the state of my Church (leaving the members of the other Churches to judge the state of theirs) I could only foretell failure, the end, and a disastrous scandal. Of course I do not know Christianity from the outside only; I am aware of the difference between the factual state of the Church and the Churches, and what constitutes the real content of the "good news", that is the gospel for our times and our society. I do not know of any other programme altogether richer in promises and more objective, more realistic for this world threatened from all sides, gripped with all possible fears, and for this same reason extremely dangerous. But for a long time now I have been asking myself: How to tell this? What must I say, not so much to win over the people, but at least *not* to repel them? How can my words ever be convincing when the Christian society is letting out foul smells of decay? When I, too, inevitably exhale these emanations?

I think that any theoretical answer to your questions and to other similar ones would be inadequate and ultimately vain. Only action would be fitting here. An answer can only be found in praxis. The struggle for the enactment of laws and the respect of human rights and civic freedom is such an opportunity to act and to show in practice that Christianity is not dead. There are of course other opportunities less spectacular. But the opportunities which will not have been seized, will be lost for ever, and it will be pointless to pretend that they went by unnoticed, and that we did not recognize the opportunity of our life. We will be told: so long as you will have failed to do the least thing for these poor wretches who have been disgraced, dishonoured, betrayed, persecuted by the police and the tribunals, at work and in schools, those who have been sacked and deprived of the possibilities of studying, on whose name lies and calumnies have been circulated, you will have done nothing whatsoever. No matter whether we shed tears later on, or feel regret for not having taken action, no matter whether we re-examine

ourselves acknowledging our errors and making amendments where we can — it will be too late. Whoever wishes to keep himself ready for the great occasion will have already missed it. The great occasion is here and now. Christian, *"now is the time for action"*. It is in everyday commonplace happenings that your faults will be recognised or redeemed. What do we read in Isaiah's prophecy ?

"What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices ?
says the Lord,
I have enough of burnt offerings of rams,
and the fat of fed beasts,
I do not delight in the blood of bulls,
or of rams, or of he-goats.

"When you come to appear before me,
who requires of you
this trampling of my courts ?
Bring no more vain offerings,
incense is an abomination to me
New moon and sabbath and the calling of assemblies —
I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly

Your new moons and your appointed feasts
my soul hates,
they have become a burden to me,
I am weary of bearing them
When you spread forth your hands,
I will hide my eyes from you,

Even though you make many prayers,
I will not listen,
Your hands are full of blood
Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean,
remove the evil of your doings
from before my eyes,

cease to do evil,
learn to do good,
seek justice,
correct oppression,
defend the fatherless,
plead for the widow " (Is 1.11-17).

Which oppressed will the Christian help today ? You who pretend to be Christian, who are sure of being one, which oppressed will you help ? To whom will you do justice here, in this country ? Or is there another more important task which awaits you ? As you see. I end with a question.

Yours,

Prague, 14th April 1977. Ladislav HEJDANEK.

Towards the Synod on the Laity

S. J. EMMANUEL

THE 1986 Synod in Rome on the subject of *The Laity in the Church* will be the sixth ordinary episcopal synod following the great council of Vatican II. Realising that the great reform initiated by Vatican II needs further study, reflection and action, Pope Paul VI announced the institution of the synod as "a beautiful and promising novelty" (14.9.1965). But the experience of the five synods, during the past two decades (1971 Priesthood and Justice, 1974 Evangelization, 1977 Catechesis, 1980 Family, 1983 Reconciliation) seems to evoke mixed reactions in the main body of the church, ranging from despair and indifferentism to new hope and activism.

To those who consider the changes initiated by Vatican II as too liberal, progressive and "worldly", the follow-up synods become *useful instruments in regaining lost territory*, in putting back to order what was disturbed by the (evil) spirit of Vatican II and even turning the trends backwards to a pre-Vatican condition. Such people, though a minority, are powerful and effective even today. May God bless them with a new Pentecost.

To those who consider Vatican II as the closing of a polemic (against reformers, non-Christians, communists) era and its teachings as the conclusive stand for the future, the follow-up synods have the very limited scope of *merely clarifying the already adopted stand*, or making some cosmetic changes. A close review of recent ecclesiastical statements suggest that the majority, at least among the decision-makers, are in this group. Doctrinally, they rightly argue, more than enough has been written and taught. What is most required is the practice of at least the most basic teachings of the Council.

Still there is a third group, a progressive minority, who see in Vatican II the inauguration of a new era of an "open-church". To these *the teachings of Vatican II need to be developed and pastorally articulated* by further synods, especially at national and diocesan levels, because it is at the lower, parochial levels that the lack of practice is most glaring.

Synod of the Laity ?

The very theme of the next synod — the laity — demands a change in the usual style of preparation, procedure and participation. Any attempt to steer the minds of the laity in a tangential manner towards some cosmetic changes and away from entering into the central questions about their true place in the life of the church must be avoided. To be equally avoided is a preparatory schema outlining the synod's foregone conclusive statement. The synod is episcopal. But this does not forbid the organisers of the synod to get a more representative cross-section of the laity and their liberal thinking into the synod. Lay people carefully selected by pastors as harmless representatives of existing lay-apostolates or pious groups represent neither the majority nor the majority-thinking in the church.

Hence we hope that the synod invites into its active deliberations, and not merely as observers or passive lay inputs, a fairly wide representative group of lay people of all ages, from apostolate groups, administrative groups, secular groups, etc that can give witness to all aspect sof the lives of lay Christians.

Promise of Vatican II

Most of us will admit that with its comprehensive theology of the church as the People of God, Vatican II has gone miles ahead from the earlier teaching on the laity based on a partial theology of the church, a "hierarchology" We have merely to recall what St Pius X wrote in 1906 that the right and authority necessary to promote and direct all the members of the church towards the final goal of society rests *only* in the hierarchy As for the "multitude", they have no right other than that of letting themselves be led and of following their pastors obediently and with docility. After this one can read the numerous statements of Vatican II regarding the heritage, freedom, dignity of the laity (*LG* 9), their charisms (*LG* 12) and services (*LG* 30), and their role in the mission of the church (*LG* 33).

Very Little Achieved

But in spite of all these statements very little has been achieved and very much left undone to make the laity feel that they are full-fledged mature members of the church with rights and duties, with charisms and services having an influence both inside the church, as members, and outside the church, as its spokespersons. In short, the laity at their best feel that they only *belong* to the church. They

do not yet feel that they are the church. For many the church has become "a kind of religious supermarket in which divine wares are on sale. One pays unhesitatingly, when one can, for the ceremonies which have been ordered, but one has nothing to do with the business itself. People are constantly asking what a baptism, a wedding, or a mass might cost. People do not feel like responsible subjects in this church, whose only goal is to take care of them".[1]

Participation in Decision-Making

If sufficient and active lay participation is allowed in the synod, the question of lay participation in the decision-making process of the church is bound to come up. This was a blind-spot at Vatican II. But the post-Vatican experiences of local churches converge to demand *a more active and meaningful role of the laity in the decisions of the church*. While encouraging an active participation of the laity in the life and decisions of the world (*GS* 31, 43, 65, 68) the council allowed them only an optional and consultative role in the decisions of the church Even with regard to matters directly affecting the laity, decisions are made for them by the clergy As a result of such practices the best that could be expected of the laity is only *a sense of BELONGING to the church* but not *a sense of BEING the church* The church is neither a pure democracy of the majority people nor a mysterious monarchy of the powerful one, but a divinely willed hierarchical collegiality/communion, based on the equality, freedom and dignity of the children of God and the variety (not superiority) of gifts, services and ministries (*LG* 9c, 12b, 13c, 18a). Unless and until the laity have, *not merely a consultative voice on some selected peripheral questions, but a decisive voice on all matters pertaining to their Christian life*, the teaching of the church about their place and function, about their freedom, dignity and charisms will remain barren and lack credibility.

World-Centred Lay Apostolate

Another question that is bound to evoke interest and call for some change is about the mode and content of the lay apostolate The view of the lay apostolate, conceived formerly as a *mere collaboration with or an extension* of the apostolate of the clergy has undergone a radical change in the teachings of Vatican II. But this has not yet found enough application in our lay apostolate groups Lay initiatives and charisms are often stifled or over-shadowed by a dominating clergy or by old instructions and constitutions How can a lay person,

1 Jürgen MOLTMANN, *The Open Church*, London, SCM Ltd., 1978, p. 99.

kept immature within the church, undertake mature christian responsibility outside the church ? Since it is the Lord who directly commissions the laity with the mission (*LG* 33b) to be the salt of the earth, it is up to them to initiate apostolic activity at all the life-centres of modern society and to face the challenges and sacrifices of such apostolate. It is the duty of the clergy to nourish the laity with the Word and the sacraments and above all to encourage groups of laity to move out of their parish halls and parish boundaries into the nerve centres of human life, be they political, economic, educational or social.

At the Local Level

At the level of our local churches, the event of the 1986 synod on the laity will serve to focus our attention and mobilise our efforts towards favouring the laity in our church The synod, though initiated from above, will serve to gather and articulate explicitly what is already implicit in the "unerring supernatural sense of the faith which characterises the people as a whole" (*LG* 12). In this sense the synod happens "from below" — in the parishes and in the dioceses — wherever we Christians, conscious of our respective places, our charisms, our rights and of our duties, reflect responsibility on our problems and on the changes needed at our local level to overcome them

The synod will be meaningful and relevant to our churches only to the extent that we prepare ourselves for it, through our demands and moves, and towards it with our hopes and desires. Let our good pastors not stifle, but welcome and encourage the inspirations of the Spirit and the sensus fidelium expressed in the thinking and initiatives of our laity They are the church.

Notes

An Outline Towards a New Approach to Our Apostolate

This is a report on the discussion a group of Jesuit priests had on "Our Mission Today" These discussions were a follow up of study we had made of the Decree 4 of the 32nd Jesuit General Congregation, which contains a call to a serious involvement in the service of faith and the promotion of justice In the face of the changing concepts of evangelisation and the apostolate it was felt necessary to evolve a workable plan of action that would help us to respond more fully and sincerely to the demands of that Decree. What follows is the substance of the discussions.

Objectives of our Apostolate

In whatever capacity we may be working, be it as missionaries in mission stations or as parish priests in a parish or as educationists in our schools or as social activists in non-conventional apostolates, our objective is the total human being and his or her integral development, as against taking only one or the other aspect of the person, such as the exclusively spiritual or the economic dimensions only The one-sided understanding of development is vitiated by a body-soul dichotomy that is based on the material spiritual conceptual framework of nature. The holistic approach encompasses human beings in all their aspects' spiritual, physical, economic, psychological, etc This focus on the, holistic development by no means undermines the "service of faith" in terms of direct evangelisation or even conversion, if the situation calls for it, to which we as Jesuits and priests are committed. However, focusing exclusively on any one aspect would mean debasing the human being as a person

Plan of Action

The means to achieve this goal could range from a purely and exclusively welfare approach to a radically revolutionary action. Within this range one adopts the line most suitable to one's situation taking into account its feasibility given the resources that one has Hence that approach is seen as lying anywhere within the continuum having on one end an exclusively welfare or "charity" outlook and on the other a purely revolutionary thrust

Given our different ideological perspectives, our available resources and the local socio-economic and political conditions, no one particular approach can be applied to any and every situation. Consequently, options will necessarily vary according to the problems faced and the reality of the situation. However, regardless of on what point of the

continuum the approach we take falls, it should be characterised by these two fundamental elements: (a) it should be "people-oriented" as opposed to "target-oriented", and (b) it should seek the total and integral development of people as persons.

Within this framework, and without seeking to advocate any particular brand of strategy, our discussion revolved around specifying the different components that go to make up this approach. These components are:

1. *Awareness*. This is a basic component of this approach. Whatever action is taken in the field, it should consciously seek to raise the awareness of the people we are working with. This increased awareness refers specifically to (a) awareness of their socio-economic reality,(b) awareness of the political forces within the region, (c) awareness of their own potential, and (d) awareness of certain relevant technologies such as more efficient agricultural techniques so that through the implementation of these they can grow economically independent to the extent possible.

2. *Decision-making*. This seeks the empowerment of the people by gradually guiding them to decide for themselves and thereby eventually help them to take their destiny in their own hands instead of allowing others to rule *over* them. This could be achieved through group discussions and dialogues with the people, thus enabling them to discern for themselves what is best in their interest

3 *People's organisation* This involves a negative and a positive aspect. The negative aspect consists in the decentralisation of our works. For various reasons, our parishes or the mission stations have become, through the years, the centres of social activity in the area The people have come to look upon the mission station as the panacea for all their problems, and the missionary as their rescuer. This "God-father" image of the missionary, although in many areas today it is in the process of being changed, has led the people to depend on him for anything and everything This myth now needs to be exploded if any genuine development of the people is to take place wherein their dependence is transformed into self-dependence and their feelings of inferiority into self-respect Obviously, this weaning process is a difficult one both for the people and for the one sincerely involved in the concerns of the people.

The positive aspect in the formation of a people's organisation is the creation of a local cadre This goes hand in hand with the process of gradual decentralisation. As dependence on the mission station is being decreased, proportionately greater dependence on themselves should be created This is possible only if local leadership is encouraged and developed. This eventually leads to the building up of the people's organisation, wherein they feel the inner strength emerging from within the unity of their group.

4. *Respect for the cultural aspects of the group*. In our effort to built a people's organisation, the inner strengths of the group should

be fully capitalised upon. For instance, among the adivasis there is a strong sense of community and openness. They are a cohesive group. Building the edifice of people's organisation on the foundation of this inborn cohesiveness should make our work much more contextual than introducing a structure based on the welfare state that is alien to the group. A basic working knowledge of the group and due respect for the culture and traditions of the people could contribute greatly in facilitating our work and apostolate among them.

5. *Concern for the pace of the people* In our enthusiasm for the so-called "upliftment" of the people, we tend unwittingly to force a pace on the people that we are accustomed to, but for which they may not be prepared yet Sensitivity to their pace of growth might help much to prevent the creation of antagonistic attitudes in them and discouragement and disillusionment in us

6 *Change in attitudes* Whatever plan of action we adopt it should be geared towards a gradual but radical change in the attitudes of the people, their attitudes towards their own socio-economic reality, education, family welfare, etc Change in attitudes will eventually be manifested in the life-style.

The rural youth that has been fortunate enough to be educated and trained, are often allured by the glamour of urban life They refuse to be bothered about the concerns of their fellow villagers They imbibe the urban values of individualism and competitiveness, conflicting with the values that are inherent in the community they come from such as cooperation and collective self-reliance The new values may be the result of an educational system that is primarily geared to the needs of the city-dweller. This needs to be rectified

7 *Collaboration with the local authorities and voluntary organisations* It is necessary to establish a good rapport with the local government and other officials such as the BDO, the panchayat, the banks and other voluntary organisations that might be operating in the area But it is not always possible to obtain the collaboration of the local bureaucracy because they might be working at cross purposes with us. In such cases great tactfulness is called for

Good rapport with these organisations is of paramount importance also from another point of view It is through these agencies that the government seeks to implement its programmes, making large sums available for the different rural development projects. Hence we should not too easily seek financial aid from outside, but rather do our utmost, along with the people, to first tap these resources for the integral development of the people

Thus the strategy that we use should no longer have the paternalistic outlook that it probably had in the past. It should rather seek the fullest participation of the people in their own integral development, thereby increasing their self confidence and helping them to gain greater self-respect so that they can live in true human dignity.

Difficulties Envisaged

In the implementation of this approach in our apostolic labours opposition is invariably encountered. This opposition is observed to come from two sources: (a) opposition from outside the Church, and (b) opposition from within the Church.

(a) *Opposition from outside*. The sources of this opposition are many, such as, the panchayat, or the BDO, or the bank, or the people themselves. The Bank manager, for instance, could unnecessarily delay the granting of a loan or could ask for his "share" of the loan. As mentioned earlier, great tact is required to handle such cases, and it is easier if we have a general good rapport with these officials.

The people themselves too could become an obstacle in their development. They could be very lethargic and confused — unable to understand the long term effects and the impact of this approach. Patience and a persevering spirit will help tide over this initial and temporary state of uncertainty

(b) *Opposition from within the Church itself* This could occur as a result of apparently conflicting ideologies. Hence genuine dialogue and openness to one another will help clear up doubts and misunderstandings. A healthy self-criticism and regular evaluation of one's work together with the community will serve greatly to widen one's horizons and be more acceptable of the point of view of the other members in the believing community

Conclusion

Given the diverse cultural backgrounds of the country and the availability of resources, one cannot advocate a specific plan of action. It has to be adapted to each situation The strategies adopted, therefore, will vary in degree only, and not in modality, in reference to the different components explained above To the extent they vary in degree only, they cannot be perceived as being opposed to each other, provided one is open to the higher degrees in the same continuum, that is, to a greater and greater participation of the people in their own development

This has implications for our role. It indicates that in our apostolates, we ought to be playing the role of a catalyst, supporting and guiding the people wherever and whenever necessary, but leaving the actual decision-making and implementation of the programme to the people themselves The discussions and dialogues with the people give sufficient occasion for bringing in the faith dimension and the values of the Gospel. They also provide ample opportunity to directly relate life and religion.

Our dialogue helped us to perceive the differences in our views on this issue. It also highlighted our conflicting opinions and approaches given our specific situations. And yet underlying this diversity there was a felt need for greater unity, despite our conflicting opinions and approaches. Moreover, the socio-economic situation of our country

is so overwhelming that it demands that we be united among ourselves if at all we are to make any positive contribution to the progress of our people.

This, hopefully, will make our apostolate a meaningful venture in which we seek the growth of the people of God as full human beings.

Philip Viegas, S.J.*

Muhammad and the Christian

Bishop Kenneth Cragg must be considered the outstanding living scholar of Christian-Muslim relations. For more than three decades, as a pastor, teacher or author he has been in living touch with one or the other part of the Muslim world. He has presented to the Christians in a lucid and at the same time theologically engaging style not only what fascinates and concerns the Muslim believers most deeply but also the issues that both Muslims and Christians can and should face together in mutual search and outreach. He has thus creatively and decisively inspired and monitored new ways of encounter and of sharing between Christian and Muslim believers, part of a larger movement aiming at remaking the Christian-Muslim relations.

The Bishop's works are marked by familarity with the best of Islamic religious expression, scholarly, literary and artistic, as well as by a deep acquaintance with the Christian theological heritage which he perceives in the balanced and broad-minded evangelical catholic mode characteristic of the best of Anglican scholarship. To these he adds the gifts of a sensitive literary perception and of an incisive and engaging style of writing.

Kenneth Cragg's *The Call of the Minaret* (1956) and *Sandals at the Mosque* (1959) have become well-known classics. More recently he introduced the non-Muslim reader to the Islamic Scripture. Although commanding such a uniquely and abidingly central place in Muslim life and reflection, this Scripture has remained hard of access for the hearts and minds of students of Islam. This reviewer can testify that the two works *The Event of the Qur'an* (1971) and *The Mind of the Qur'an* (1973) have won the author much sympathy and admiration even on the part of such Muslim scholars who till then were regarding him — who never tries to disguise his Christian commitment — with some suspicion and distrust.

Muhammad and the Christian[1] follows quite naturally on these studies of the Qur'an. The Qur'an as the definite will and guidance of God, manifested to humankind, was given to and delivered by Muhammad, son of ʿAbdullah. With the sure instinct for what needs

*Fr Philip Viegas is now on the staff of the Indian Social Institute, New Delhi.

1 **Muhammad and the Christian.** A Question of Response. By Kenneth Cragg. *London, Darton, Longman and Todd/Maryknoll, New York, Orbis*, 1984. Pp. xii-180. £ 5.95.

to be explored and the courage to take scholarly risks K. Cragg sets out in the present work to respond as a Christian to the insistent and ongoing request of Muslims for "acknowledgement of the Prophet Muhammad" (xi). He is fully aware of the difficulties involved in this task — which, as far as I know, has not been undertaken in any comparable way before. The silence of the Vatican Declaration about the person of Muhammad and his role is significant and indicative of a general reserve. After all, is it possible at all to do justice to the central belief of a faith community other than one's own ? Is it not wiser to restrict oneself to just collecting — by the refined methods of contemporary scholarship — all information available, and resolutely refrain from any assessment, thus practising what is termed in our day inter-religious tolerance ? K. Cragg thinks instead that Islam's claim to universal allegiance demands sincere study, openness of heart and mind, and an undisguised response. An *a priori* exclusion of Islam's truth claim from the inner sanctuary of one's mind, he argues, would seem to indicate prejudice and lack of esteem. In his own words "the Christian conscience must develop a faithful appreciation of the Qur'an and thereby participate with Muslims in [sic !] Muhammad within that community of truth as to God and man, creation and nature, law and mercy, which they afford But such community in truth will never cease to stand in need of those measures of grace and love, of sin and redemption, which are distinctive of the Gospel and which must remain incompatible with the original assumptions of Islamic *Jihad*" (141)

Chapters two and three consider the historical facts of Muhammad's life, especially his military and political involvements. It is here, for instance when considering the massacre of the Banu Qurayzah and the confiscations and intimidations of Medina, that Christian students of Muhammad's life see 'dark areas' rousing their animus and leading to ethical revulsion The author insists here and throughout on the need to view the whole story of Muhammad "as a single unity of commitment to a mission, received from God, the means to which developed from word to action, from preaching to power, by an inner logic that the 'divine' must necessarily 'succeed' — a logic which was always there, if only latent" (50).

Besides the Muhammad of 'objective' history, there is the ideal Muhammad as he lives on in the veneration of the Muslims' hearts and minds, the "Muhammad of the soul" (ch 4) who is at the same time "the definite Muslim" (ch. 5). Muhammad abides with the community in his recorded words and actions He is "the mirror of Muslim self-understanding, the crucible of the contemporary value judgements of Islam" (68) and "remains the touchstone of Islamic identity and loyalty" (71).

It is therefore proper to approach the Muslims via the Muhammad that lives in their hearts and minds as a model and instrument for achieving God's will. Going thus beyond merely conceptual controversy to the level of inward experience one will come to realize that for most Muslims Muhammad as a human person comes close to being

"the point and place of divine self-giving to reveal and to redeem" (65), a phrase that applies properly and fully to the Jesus of the Christian faith.

In his discussion of Muhammad's prophetic experience (ch. 6) the author is at pains to show that the Muslim belief in verbal inspiration could be seen within the Qur'an to go together with the view of Muhammad's prophethood "as a deep human experience under a directing sense of divine transcendence" from which derives "a compelling destiny to preach and to prevail" (98).

But the ultimate area of Christian response to Islam is the Christian response to Islam's Scripture (ch. 7). Here Kenneth Cragg wants to win us over first to a patient and perceptive appreciation of and a positive Christian reckoning with the Qur'an, so that we may then become aware of its positive potential The Christian must try to share the Muslims' esteem of Muhammad within the Qur'an's witness to God's Lordship, and within a religious anthropology wherein human allegiance is freely given in responsible stewardship for creation.

All this does not intend to do away with the serious reservations the believer in the Gospel will certainly have. These, however, must be experienced and voiced as it were from within Quranic territory. Mutual hostilities at various levels should not dissuade us from realizing a community of Muslim and Christian believers under Transcendence and in stewardship. The Christian will acknowledge Muhammad's witness to divine Lordship and truth, while at the same time taking issue with the way it has been actively translated in the face of rejection and opposition to the call In the pattern of Muhammad, prophetic action means that when the words of guidance fail, power may and must be invoked in God's name When people withold their attentiveness and are obdurate, political means, including military might, must be used to put things right Thus the word of the Prophet becomes military struggle In contrast, in the way of the Gospel, God's ultimate victory is achieved in suffering and in the earthly defeat and forgiving self-offering of the prophetic witness, with whom God identifies. The God of the Jesus of the Gospel discloses himself to our human situation not only in law and education but in grace and suffering God thus comes by his own initiative "into the pathos of His creation as man's devising has wronged it" (158) God's love meets the deepest human yearning and, in so doing vindicates the divine supremacy.

These contrasts and the ensuing reservations must however be allowed to emerge and be experienced within the togetherness of an over-renewed common prophetic witness of Muslims and Christians in the face of the God-less secularity and the proud idolizing of created realities of our age "If restoring Jesus' principle, we question or regret the Caesar in Muhammad, it will only be for the sake, in their Quranic form, of those same 'things of God' which move us to acknowledge him" (159).

The present work has grown out of a life-long search and encounter. It practises what it aims at: a meaningful Christian-Muslim theology.

Beyond this, it throws light on the task, to be done with God's help, of mastering responsibly the multi-societal and vulnerable technological reality of our day. This reviewer does not know of any comparable Christian theological response to the global presence with us of the people of Muhammad and the religious challenge they pose to us.

One could argue that a number of the well-known Christian reservations regarding Muhammad's personal life and manner of rule have not been sufficiently discussed. However, doing so might well have weakened the impact of the main argument of the work. Only one major error has mysteriously slipped into the otherwise excellently produced text — as the reviewer writes from India, he may be forgiven for mentioning it — the Taj Mahal (146) belongs of course to imperial Agra rather than to educational Aligarh.

Christian W. TROLL, S.J.

Now we can understand why Muslims believe Muhammad to be a perfect man. Leaving aside for the time being the sufic image of a perfect man, the Prophet was perfect in the sense that he was a whole man, the man of an integrated personality in all its fulness not as an embodiment of some ethical virtues conceived ideally but as a complete man Where else in history can we find a man who could stand firm on the battlefield like a soldier, plan the battle like a strategist, negotiate peace like a diplomat, give a helping hand in the household work, mend his sandles, happy to run with his loving wife in sport, kind towards children, having concern for animals, considerate to old women and yet, above all, a man of God able to withdraw himself in solitude to record the signals from the unseen and to give ear to the whispers which seemed to come to him from the mysterious depths of being. This was indeed Muhammad who was born an orphan whom God gave shelter only to make him grow into one of the most powerful forces of history. May peace be on him!

Syed VAHIDUDDIN
New Delhi

Book Reviews

Doctrinal Theology

Man and His Problems in the Light of Jesus Christ. By LATOURELLE, S.J. Translated from the French by Matthew J. O'Connell. *New York, Alba House*, 1981. Pp. xiv-395. $ 9.95.

Christian faith had provided a stimulus for modern progress. However, modern man got locked up within material concerns and now finds himself disoriented. Latourelle, the well known author of *Theology of Revelation*, is still convinced that Christ, and Christ alone, gives meaning to the human condition as a whole and sheds light on his main problems. The author had already considered the two basic signs of revelation in his work *Christ and the Church: Signs of Salvation*. In the present work he seeks to show how Jesus and his message answer the radical questions of human existence.

After a preliminary chapter on the meaning of human existence in the contemporary context, the author studies the problem in two parts: the first according to insights of three great French thinkers, Pascal, Teilhard and Blondel, the second dealing with the problems of work, solitude, otherness, communion, freedom, sin, suffering, death and salvation.

In Pascal, Christ as "exegesis and fulfilment" appears as the mystery that illumines and heals the mystery of man as abyss of wretchedness and greatness. In Teilhard, the universal Christ-Omega reconciles all things and makes everything cohere and converge. In Blondel, the uniquely necessary, which is Christ himself, is the light-filled way that illumines the mystery of human action. The thought of these three most profound and critical minds should make more acceptable an encounter with Jesus of Nazareth who is Emmanuel, God with us. "The encounter is the shattering, unparalleled encounter of two mysteries that are correlative despite the distance that separates them: the mystery that deciphers man, consolidates the forward march of mankind, and bears the secret but powerless desire that is implicit in human action" (p. 215).

The author deals with particular problems in Part II in the light of *Gaudium et Spes* of Vatican II and the encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* of Pope John Paul II. He makes many profound reflections on the themes of solitude and communion, although at times the treatment is too sketchy as of the topic "love of others, as participation in the life of the Trinity." He traces a fine theology of work in the chapter on "Work, Research and Progress." The themes of evil, freedom, suffering and death are illuminated by the mystery of Christ. Finally, the whole work leads up to a new vision of "The God of Jesus Christ."

While this work is surely to be welcomed as a significant contribution to Christian Anthropology, the social dimension of the problem of man does not seem to have been sufficiently highlighted. The perspective is too European, and even here Marxism does not receive much attention. Still, the work is relevant in as much as modern European thought does affect newly industrialized societies to a great extent.

G. LOBO, S.J.

Magisterium. Teaching Authority in the Catholic Church. By FRANCIS A. SULLIVAN. *Dublin, Gill and Macmillan*, 1983. Pp. 234. £ 6.95 (paper).

In keeping with the spirit of the Vatican II Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, the author introduces in the very first chapter the theme of the infallibility of the people of God, before dealing with the magisterium of the hierarchy. After elucidating the concept of magisterium in the second chapter, he moves on to consider in the following chapters the biblical and historical foundations for the teaching authority of bishops, councils and popes (chapters 3 and 4), discusses at length the infallibility of this magisterium (chapters 5 and 6), and the nondefinitive exercise of papal and conciliar teaching authority (chapter 7). In the last chapter dealing with a much debated question on the relationship between theologians

and the ecclesiastical magisterium, the author reproduces the theses of the International Theological Commission on the question (1975) and comments on them.

The book seems to ignore the reality of the local churches, and this is unfortunate. For today any talk of the magisterium cannot prescind from the fact that the church is a communion of churches, and not a mere geographic extension of the one universal church with a centralised magisterium. One would wish that the author had treated the question from the angle of the local churches: this would have given the book a greater relevance and pastoral orientation. This would also have been in line with the objective of the book which wants to be an introduction of the topic to non-specialists. There is a general danger that instead of speaking meaningfully to the laity on church and Christian realities with reference to their concrete experiences, theology for the laity may be conceived, as this book seems to do, as a simplified presentation of some heavy dogmatic truths supposedly reserved to the specialists and the clergy.

For all its lack of perspective in the overall approach to the question of magisterium, the book does contain valuable insights For example, speaking of the use of the word "magisterium" the author reminds us that it is not something exclusive to the teaching office of the hierarchy according to St Thomas, we are told, there is not only a magisterium of the pastors but a magisterium of theologians as well, which derives from their knowledge and competence The book discusses interesting questions like the possibility of dissent from non-infallible magisterium and the "reception" of the magisterial and conciliar teachings by the people of God Speaking of the infallibility of the people of God the author asks whether the universal agreement of the faithful in matters of faith and morals (cf *LG* 11) refers only to Catholics or includes all Christians, since Vatican II has overcome the exclusive identification of the church with the Roman Catholic church by recognising the ecclesial reality of other Christian communities. The same question is posed in connection with the reception of the magisterial decisions by the faithful. But in these and similar questions the author, instead of going into the problems they raise, tends to close the discussion hastily with the safe traditional answers.

The book could be recommended to those who are eager to know what the magisterium today says about itself. It may be of little use to those who would like to reflect on the whole question of the teaching authority of the church from a critical point of view.

Fr Felix WILFRED.

Toward a Christian Political Ethics. By José MIGUEZ BONINO. *London, SCM Press Ltd.*, 1983, Pp 126. £ 5.50.

J.M. Bonino, a leading Protestant theologian of Latin America, explores from the situation of the peoples' struggle for justice, freedom and dignity, the meaning of political ethics, its tasks, and its roots in biblical faith. In faithfulness to the human commitment and to God, Christians have to learn "to confess him from within the womb of politics" (p 8), know how to name Him prophetically, and how to stake their lives with and for the poor, for all the poor of the world. This is political ethics in action The book, says Miguez, is simply meant to witness to this It also aims at clarifying the responsibility Christians should assume for the world and to offer some reflection and tools for meeting such responsibility. Miguez is aware of the tremendous importance of a sound theoretical framework for political ethics and the need for an interdisciplinary approach.

The need for a political ethics is accentuated by the political dimension of all modern life, especially the political power behind modern technology and its agents Can Christians respond to the world of economic power relations and structures compounded with modern science/technology, and to the new conceptions of political life in the world? Miguez examines the history of political ethics by pointing out some typical approaches to theological concerns. He discuses at some length the two kingdoms theology of Luther and the danger such a dualism involves with regard to unquestioned acceptance of political power. He also discusses Harnack's views on the Church's role in public life in the same dualistic pattern of Luther, i.e. the Gospel does not have anything to do with the law (the secular realm of politics) He also refers to Marx's view that love is the source of Christian statecraft and not money, which can only create thing-relationships between people

The problem of Christian political ethic is posed by its history as to whe-

ther it is possible to hold together love and power, justice and order, in thought and praxis. Miguez then discusses the problems of Latin American forms of government, especially authoritarianism and the national security state doctrine.

In chapters 6,7 and 8, Miguez puts together his reflections on political ethics, on justice and order, hope and power, and the passage from conviction to strategy. A project of liberation comprehends a political ethical praxis that aims at a societal appropriation of the means of production and of political power, so as to create freedom and a new social consciousness. In translating this project into the concrete circumstances of a country or continent, like Latin America, further determination of priorities is important. The determination of alternatives of political praxis and of priorities is not posed idealistically but emerges from the understanding of the actual situation of the people of a country. Far from being idealistic, political ethics is based on historical realities.

Theologically any ethic claiming to be Christian must accept the incarnational perspective which affirms "the humanity of God" according to Christianity, "the most avowedly materialist of all religious" (Dostoyevsky). The incarnation becomes the clue to understand all of God's dealing with human beings and the whole world reality. It speaks of God's affirmation of man and commits us to the "ultimate significance of the historical process" (p. 80). Jesus Christ in his historical and permanent ministry becomes "the measure and power of God's purpose in the world" (p. 81).

In discussing the hermeneutics between order and justice, Miguez evaluates Augustine's approach to justice and order. For Augustine peace is order calling for a harmonious function of society and for a suppression of conflict and tumult. This is the basic direction of political ethic. Justice and love, though supreme theologically are historically subordinated to order. The Church's role is then one of supporting, sustaining and guiding the civil state. If order is the basic thrust, love and justice lose their critical power for fixing historical priorities. Miguez brings in here the concept of "the order of justice", rooted in the biblical righteousness-justice, as the distinguishing mark of the kingdom. In this, "the rights of the poor" become the criterion of right government. Regarding the point of departure in the theological determination of priorities, the question is "what kind of order or which order is compatible with the exercise of justice" (i.e., the right of the poor) (p. 86). The biblical concept of *shalom* that includes well-ordered relationships clarifies this point.

Miguez goes on to discuss the meaning of power in the political realm. He affirms theologically that all power belongs to God, as manifested in the "mighty acts" of God to liberate people. In the Bible, God's power is mediated both charismatically and institutionally, but with ambiguities. The relation of power to service in the message of Jesus (Mk 10:42-43) is theologically important for political ethics. Such an approach to power is sanctioned by the death and resurrection of Jesus, pointing to his messianic kingship.

In the epilogue, Miguez affirms clearly the centrality of love in political ethics. Love is the inner meaning of politics and politics its outer form. Miguez has given a book on political ethic from the point of the poor and liberation rooted in the biblical tradition and that of the Churches — a book that challenges both activists and theologians. This is more than what he intended to do i.e., to offer some "theological footnotes".

S. AROKIASAMY, S.J.

Death Where is Your Sting? By George A. MALONEY, S.J. *New York, Alba House*, 1984. Pp xvi-155. $ 6.95.

This book speaks of the mystery of death as the mystery of God's love. In his reflections its author makes use of his personal and pastoral experience, and the insights of contemporary theology. The book opens with a chapter dealing with the shock and darkness that death brings when a loved one dies. It then reflects on the fact that each one has to face the fact of death. Chapter 3 deals with the modern understanding of purgatory, which the author calls a "therapy of love". The communion of saints and their attitude towards us and our attitude towards them leads us to understand the healing of both the living and the departed through Christ, specially the healing of guilt feelings accumulated intentionally or unintentionally. Heaven is presented as the goal where death leads us, to participate in God's love at a higher level, and hell is shown not to be incompatible with the love of God for the whole of human-

sity. The sixth and final chapter deals with the final resurrection as the consummation of all that humanity has passed through. Through all these chapters Fr Maloney conveys a sense of hope and enables the reader to face the mystery of death with courage. For the believer, in death life is changed, not ended. The author speaks beautifully of the victory of selfless love over death in our ability to remain in communion with the loved ones who have gone before us sealed with the love of God in Christ.

Bernard MURMU, S.J.

Correct Ideas Don't Fall from the Skies: Elements for An Inductive Theology By Georges CASALIS *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books*, 1984 Pp xvi-219 $ 8 95.

Originally published in French in 1977, the present translation begins with a quotation from Mao which sets the tone of the book "Where do correct ideas come from ? Do they fall from the skies ? No Are they innate in the mind ? No They come from social practice and from it alone " Georges Casalis is an activist Protestant theologian, closely acquainted with the Third World reality The perspective of the book is basically West European The author makes a critique of the traditional deductive theology ("dominant theology") First of all there is no pure deductive theology, in the sense that the dogmatic truths of Christianity were originally inducted from Christian praxis Secondly, these general truths themselves are formulated and interpreted within the framework of the contemporary ideologies and hence are relative in their formulations. Thirdly, there is no theology which is impartial and apolitical With historical proof Casalis shows how theology, both Catholic and Protestant, has remained always political and partisan

After the extensive critique of the deductive approach to theology, the author takes definite steps towards an inductive approach to theology Sometimes he is groping, but he is sure of the direction " 'Elements of an inductive theology' is an ambiguous and hardly satisfactory expression, yet it offers the advantage of clearly indicating opposition to the deductive approach of traditional theology " (p 6-7) The author wants theology to emerge from praxis, from life itself. "The 'inductive' approach consists in re-reading the gospel and the Christian tradition by beginning with praxis— that is, by concrete practice in the conflicts between the classes" (p. 25).

The book is useful as a critique of the traditional theological methodology and as an orientation towards an experience-based inductive theology.

R. ATHICKAL, S.J.

Social Questions

Social Analysis. By Joe HOLLAND and Peter HENRIOT, S J Revised and Enlarged Edition. *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis*, 1983 Pp xxii-118. $ 5.95.

If you agree that the promotion of justice is an integral part of the service of faith, then this is a book for you to read from cover to cover. The simplicity of the style and the clarity of reflection are matched by the practical orientation given to the text. The authors move methodically from reflection to action and systematically link faith to social science and to justice.

Social analysis is done within a broad understanding of the crisis of modern civilization After studying the "root metaphor" of the machine, operating in the industrial world of ours, and the alternative metaphor proposed by others of humanity as a "work of art", the book goes into a deeper analysis and sees society as the *laos*, "the People of God". From this the discussion moves on to the relationship between social analysis, theological reflection and spirituality.

The stance taken by the authors is balanced. They pause at every stage to analyse their own attitudes and assumptions in all frankness What do they try to achieve in the course of these pages ? They link "faith energies with energies of justice and peace at the service of the living God and of social transformation" Faith and justice need to become one flesh in the single act of the love of God and of humanity Social analysis begins with the experience of the social predicament But experience does not exist in a vacuum. It is always related to the mind sets and interpretations of people who experience. Thus social analysis can never be neutral or detached In order to have an accurate experience of society one must insert oneself into it From this live contact with reality the social relatedness and the cause-effect sequences are studied. Social analysis done by whatever school contains always implicitly or explicitly a theology of life. It is always directed

towards human values, human life, human struggle and destiny. As Christians we must look at the analysed data in the light of our living faith, scripture, the church's social teachings and the traditional interpretations. Thus social analysis becomes theological. Having considered these areas, the authors lead us on to pastoral planning for praxis.

The book can be considered a practical manual for pastors. The meaning of social analysis is well explained and its relevance to action studied, always with a view to the promotion of justice. The authors provide illustrations of analytical approaches to various problems and explore the suggestions and the questions they raise which demand pastoral responses. Chapter four is a brilliant example of the application of the method that combines vision with praxis. Though the American society is taken for study, the methodology will help any one who in faith and faithfulness seeks justice. There is an Indian edition of the book, published by the Sat Prakashan Sanchar Kendra, Indore.

S. AUGUSTINE, S.J.

Churches in Contestation. Asian Christian Social Protest. By Parig DIGAN. *New York, Maryknoll, Orbis Books*, 1984. Pp. x-214. $ 10.95.

The book leads the readers to feel the pulse of the Asian Churches in their struggles to operate as a force of social transformation in the contemporary history of the continent. It narrates the story of these struggles against the background of a continent marked by a colonial past and faced with new political and social processes in the post-colonial era. The book is far from being a mere compilation of facts and events. It offers an admirable synthesis and an insightful interpretation of the diverse political, social and cultural factors at work in Asia, the various streams of Christian social thought and the initiatives in social involvement. With all the dangers of confusion inherent in the difficult task of bringing together wide ranging materials from many countries and many churches to present a comprehensive picture of the situation, it is striking that the author has maintained an enviable clarity of thought and expression all through. The various Christian associations and movements and official bodies like Federation of Asian Bishops Conference (FABC) and Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) are given due attention. Individuals who symbolize the new ferment of social thought in Asia like M.M. Thomas of India, Cardinal Kim of Korea and Bishops Labayen and Claver of Philippines, as well as radicals like Edicio de la Torre and Chi Ha Kim find their due place in the exposition.

The bibliography containing scattered documents and sources, the index and seven appendices, among which a list of significant events in 1965-1982 in relation to the Asian Christian social protest, enhance the quality of this book as a useful reference work for all those who are interested and involved in the drama of the Asian Churches. For all the merits of the work, one is surprised that a very significant volume as *The Church in India in the Struggle for a New Society* incorporating the statement, papers and proceedings of an important seminar held in Bangalore in 1981, fails to find recognition in the list of the bibliography. Such an omission is regrettable.

Fr Felix WILFRED

The Emerging Christian Woman. Church and Society Perspectives. Edited by Stella FARIA, A. V. ALEXANDER and Jessie B. TELLIS-NAYAK. *Pune, Satprakashan Sanchar Kendra/Ishvani*, 1984. Pp. xii-292. Rs 25 (paper), 32 (bound).

This collection of essays by some of the prominent feminists of our times, both men and women, is the fruit of much study, reflection, analysis and experience. In its three parts and the appendices it deals with the past, present and future of women — their status and images in society, their roles and functions so often through the centuries either considered secondary or totally ignored, and the hope with which they launch their struggle for liberation to create a new bias-free and egalitarian society. Feminism is a challenge to the male chauvinism that has permeated the life-stream of our society and church, influencing so much of our value systems and structures, and a call to restructure the world order, to rewrite our history, to reinterpret our scriptures and religious traditions, and to recreate our culture so that all men and women receive equal place and respect.

The reflections on the status and images of women from the Biblical times onwards done in the first part are deeply influenced by the basic Biblical insight that man and woman are created in the

image and likeness of God. This vision was reaffirmed by Jesus as He challenged the "male dominated" and "anti-female prejudiced" Judaic culture in His own attitudes towards and relationships with women, as seen through the Gospels. Many of the essays emphasize also the stand of Vatican II and Papal encyclicals which call the church to promote unity and equality within its own structures and in the wider society. As the people of God the church must give greater importance to the mutual relationship of equality within the mystical body of Christ, while accepting that the differences of gender roles are also important.

The second part deals with the roles and functions of women with special reference to the Indian society and church. It touches on many aspects of the oppression which women face in our country, even though equality is guaranteed by our Constitution. The church in India, like the universal church reflects such discrimination in its structures and ministries. Therefore a radical change of attitude and world view alone can take us towards a more just and equal society. In this conversion, the women leaders — development workers, reformers, religious women, etc — have a great role to play.

Christian theology, catechesis and ministry need a radical refocussing both in theory and in their applications. To this end the third part gives pedagogical models for integrating feminism into theology in the formative processes, specially of seminary formation.

The feminist movement is a challenge for change and renewal similar to many other movements in the church and society. Feminism is "the working of the Holy Spirit", to which the church is called to respond with openness, and not just with caution and mistrust, as she did in the past. On the whole the book is a guide to those who join the struggle for the transformation of society. It offers matter for reflection and practical guidance to all those who are involved in the women's liberation movements.

Elsy PAUL, S.C.J.M.

Religious Dialogue

The Gītā and the Qur'ān. A comparative Study (An Approach to National Integration). By Mohammad Khan DURRANY. *Delhi, Nag Publishers*, 1982. Pp xx-308-15. Price not indicated.

The subject matter of this study and its proclaimed objective to serve national integration — reinforced by the good wishes of Indira Gandhi reproduced at the beginning of the book — will not fail to rouse interest and sympathy. For the author a comparative study of the Gītā and the Qur'ān, with special attention as to how the "two major scriptures of the two major communities" depict the human duties, is of the utmost importance for reducing the "hostility between the Hindus and the Muslims", a hostility which "is basically caused by lacking knowledge of the Gītā and the Qur'ān at the same time" (p. xiii). Thus from the preface onwards the reader is repeatedly told that there is no basic and real difference between the teaching of these two Scriptures, least in the area of moral teaching. Furthermore, it is evident, for the author, "that if there is any dissimilarity between the Gītā and the Qur'ān, it is because of the time, place and circumstances in which they were originally preached" (pp. xv-xvi).

Chapter 1 and 2 deal with the pre-Gītā and the pre-Qur'ān age, 3 and 4 present a general view of the Gītā and the Qur'ān, whereas chapters 5 to 7 deal with the concept of duty in general and, more specifically, as it is presented in the two Scriptures. The crucial and most substantial chapter is the last where for more than eighty pages the two Scriptures are "compared" as to whether they agree or disagree in their teaching on "divine affairs" and "worldly affairs". Under "divine affairs", strange as it may appear, the author lists the "concept of soul", the "relation between the creator and the created", and the "ways of divine guidance", whereas "revelation and inspiration", "ways of salvation" and "creation, death, hereafter, doomsday, day of resurrection and new creation" range as "worldly affairs". In *all* these areas, Durrany finds total agreement between the teaching of the two Scriptures. He concludes this chapter: "It has authentically been ascertained from what has been examined above that the Gītā and the Qur'ān both are equally similar in all matters of human life. Truly speaking there is not even a single point of dissimilarity between these books . .A thing which is enjoined by the Gītā expressly, the same has also been supported by the Qur'ān implicitly, and vice versa. . (p. 299). Just one concrete example may illustrate Durrany's way of arguing. Discussing the meaning of the words 'Yoga' and 'Jihād' he states: " 'Yoga' as used in the Gītā means

the same as the Arabic word '*Jihād*' used in the Qur'ān". (p. 290). *Jihad* which by common consent means "an effort of striving", i.e., in general, in the implementation of the Law and, more specificaly, in the interest of the spread of Islam, means, according to Durrany, "to perform actions as enjoined by the scriptural ordinance in a graceful way and applying skilful and intelligent methods having regard of the maintenance of the world order Thus we have seen . the absolute similarity (sic !) between the words 'Yoga' and 'Jihād' of the Gītā and Qur'ān respectively" (pp 291-2)

This book is totally innocent of clear reasoning and convincing argument The author's unproven dogma pervades every part of it "the Gītā is the Quran, of India the Qur'ān, the Gītā of Arabia" (p 300), for both of them preach a valuable lesson on humanity and national unity Instead of helping the promotion of a solid and objective knowledge of the distinct background, overall teaching and literary genius of the respective Holy Scriptures and thus creating understanding and respect among Hindus and Muslims, this study, one may fear, will cause either anger or confusion, and thus hinder rather than serve its explicit noble aims. The quality of the English is appalling, and the most basic canons of scholarly writing and method are disregarded Editing and proofreading seem to be concepts alien to the publisher We regret to have to discourage the reader from wasting time in reading or money in buying the book

Christian W Troll, SJ

The Sons of the Gods and the Daughters of Men An Afro-Asiatic Interpretation of Genesis 1-11 By Modupe Oduyoye *Maryknoll, N Y / Daystar Press Ibadan*, 1984 Pp xii-132 $ 12 95

In this study the author intends to show how several nuances of the text can be recovered by means of linguistic considerations. The approach is based upon the relationship, however remote, of the OT Hebrew and the Hamito-Semitic family (mostly West African), assuming also that all these Semitic peoples have a common basic religious tradition The work supposes a minimal initiation of Hebrew (and profitably of other Semitic languages as well), as the method is basically an exercise of comparative vocabulary, more than a study of relation between tribal religious ideas and myths. A few examples will indicate the genre.

Whereas in the African creation myth "heavens and earth" are autonomous creative powers, operating after the pattern of human sexual intercourse (heavens, male; earth, female) the Yahwist in Gen 2 eliminates such gods; only Yahweh creates, operating as a plastic artist ('moulding'). By demythologizing he displaced polydaemonic mythology with monotheistic theology "In Genesis 1 the Priestly writers (P) performed the same demythologizing by declaring that the sun and the moon and the stars are not gods ('*elohim*) but mere creatures of Yahweh" (p. 9). In P the creator is presented not as an 'artist' (as in Y), but as "a spirit who merely blows the spirit from his lips as words of life and power and sun, moon, stars, sea, land, and fish appear" (p 10) -- The same process of pressing mythology into the service of theology is found in the episode of Noah and the Flood

The noun '*adam* expresses a being of reddish-brown colour, like the tree *odum* (in Twi), the tallest and hardest of African trees whose wood is red The author argues that in the creation narrative of Gen 1-2 the first man, who had neither human father nor human mother, cannot be called '*adam* in the sense of a 'human being' As ancestor or first man he may be called *reishōn 'adam* — the head adam or adam No 1

The Sons of the Gods (in heaven) and the Daughters of men (on earth), the *gibborim* (heroes) whose achievements suggested superhuman power, must have had a superhuman ancestry one of the parents, or both, being divine These heroes were called *nephilim* because they were "fallen people", descended from heaven upon earth -"This way of thinking led to the attribution of the paternity of Jesus to heaven (God, the Spirit) while his mother was of this earth" (p 23)

Speaking about the Paradise in Eden, the author notes that in the light of Hausa *gonu*, the 'garden' could also mean a 'farm', however, since David and Solomon had provided themselves with a *gan* within the city, the meaning of 'farm' will have to be excluded According to the Accadian *edinu* (Heb '*eden*) the garden might be understood as a 'plain' or 'grassland', as in Yoruh '*odan* The author takes *gan* (garden) to refer to a 'game park and pleasure garden' which were known in Mesopotamia, "to the East" of Palestine. However, since the expression "the garden *in* Eden" is a mere geographical, not a theological reference, the writer

of Gen 2 preferred the traditional etymology according to which the Hebrew *'eden* means 'delight'.

Involving ethic, linguistic and cultural considerations of the peoples of West Africa, the author, when treating about "The Sons of *'Eber* and the Sons of *Qayin*" touches on the story of Cain and Abel, who are representatives of settled farmer's life and of nomad life. The settled life in villages and cities is seen as "a godforsaken life, an accursed life, a life of slavery to the soil The best life is the life of the nomadic herdsman to be in the world but not of the world like a Bororo among the Hausa or among the Bachama Farmers do not live like that, farmers are in the world and of it" (p. 71) On this occasion the author goes out of his way to censure Christianity for having abandoned the nomadic life "How did Christianity lose this natural connection with a life of pilgrimage? When did it become impossible to recruit disciples who would go out carrying only their staves — no purse, no luggage — as Islam was spread in West Africa by the West African *'ibrim* ?" (p 72)

The Epilogue is a plea for "Bible study for Bible reading" The author illustrates his point by examining the traditional claim that only human beings have a soul, or breath of life; that only man has been made in God's likeness, that he has been placed over animals The "likeness of God" is to be understood as a "double" (as in Mwaghavul and Pyem) In traditional Africa every person has a twin in the spirit world The fact that man was created in God's image (Gen 1 26) makes him godlike, "but we fail to see how one can read from this passage the inference that human beings alone are made in God's image Monotheism has here been allowed to interfere with the text, once *'elohim* 'gods' is rendered into 'God' the plural images (bodily manifestations) of plural gods are construed as a singular image of a singular god" (p 87).— The reader could wonder why the author, throughout the book, emphasizes the plural meaning of *'elohim* in the Bible, even after having said already in ch 1 that the Yahwehist replaced polydaemonism of the myth by monotheism The author went to the extend of interpreting *YAHWEH 'elohim* as "Yahweh in the place of gods" (p 8), or "YHWH-who-is-equal-to-'elohim" (p 9) Yet, at the end of the book he argues (from the myth) against the 'theologized' reading. — The study ends with a remark, which sounds almost as a regret: "in Hebrew belief, man is set free from the tyranny of nature" (p. 90). Man's role is to 'have dominion' over nature; but "when you narrow the domain of the spiritual, the sacred, and the sacramental (from many divine spirits believed to be manifested in many botanical and zoological forms to a simple divine spirit believed to be manifested in one zoological form), you need go only one step from monotheism to find that the awareness of the spiritual, the sacred, and the sacramental is snuffed out of human experience. You are left with materialism and secularism as intellectual human beings dominate nature and exploit it as mere material — creating, inevitably, ecological blight" (p 90).— The reader may ask whether man's present-day behaviour is due to monotheism and theology or to man's abusing of his freedom and his dominion of nature The one God manifests himself in all his creatures provided man is willing to see.

J. VOLCKAERT, S J

God's Law and God's Love. By Norman ANDERSON. *London, Collins*, 1980 Pp 199 £ 3 50

Norman Anderson presents in this volume his Henry Drummond lectures on the concepts of God's law and God's love in Eastern religions, Islam, Judaism and Christianity The author studies the concepts according to methods of comparative religion

Among the Eastern religions, Anderson touches mainly on Hinduism and traces its main trends in doctrine regarding law and love The mainline Hindu thought stresses more the law of dharma supported by the theory of karma than the theistic bhakti strand in which love of God for man is manifest In Anderson's view Hinduism is basically a religion of law rather than of love He also discusses law and love in Buddhism He then refers to the concept of natural law in the Western thought and asks whether it is voluntaristic or based on the nature of things Anderson's point is that the law of God for his creatures meant to promote justice and loving concern for others also testifies to the love of the Supreme Lawgiver.

Anderson then discusses law and love in Judaism in the framework of covenant in which law and love find unity. The law of God is fundamental to Judaism and is basically related to faith in a personal God Yet the primary emphasis in Judaism is rather on the

love man should have for God than God's love for creatures: "God is a merciful and benevolent Heavenly Father rather than a God who loves to the utmost," (p. 70). Yet Anderson does acknowledge the increasing expressions of God's love for man in the post-exilic Jewish community.

In the discussion of Islam, Anderson points out the near identity of law and morality. The stress on law is greater in Islam than in Judaism. Correspondingly the accent on love lessens. God is constantly referred to as sovereign Lord stressing His utter transcendance and man as His servant. At the same time, it must be mentioned that references to the love of God are not lacking. Despite charges of monism and pantheism against them the Sufis cultivated a love for a personal God. Islam gives man a revelation from God and not primarily revelation of Himself. That is to say, Islam is a disclosure of God's will for man and not so much of the mystery of God.

Anderson then discusses law and love in the Gospels, in St Paul and St John. He affirms the balanced Christian position of the primacy of love without discarding the necessity of law for sinful humanity.

In the chapter on suffering and evil the author surveys the broad spectrum of approaches in the different religions, stressing the specifically the Christian approach as revealed in Christ who sharing our humanity to the full died for us and rose for us. In the last chapter, Anderson uses the word Gospel instead of love and highlights the specifically Christian integration of law and love. Love as Gospel in Jesus Christ gives us an illustration of the way transformed persons should live rather than codes of behaviour. Christians have to learn the highest art of discerning between law and Gospel. Gospel is freedom and love and excludes both legalism and antinomianism.

As a survey of the themes of law and love in different religions the book is good and fruitful. But it is somewhat weak in pointing out clearly deeper convergences and specific features. The study should be of interest to students of comparative religion.

S. Arokiasamy, S.J.

Pour une théologie de structure planétaire. By Gustave Thils. Cahiers de la revue théologique de Louvain, 6. *Louvain-la-Neuve, Publication de la Faculté de Théologie*, 1983. Pp. 88. No price given.

This is an effort to tackle the theological question of religious pluralism by renouncing ecclesiocentrism in favour of a planetary perspective. One should note, however, that the theology of religions is put in the perspective of a European public. It aims at balancing the old axiom "outside the church there is no salvation" with the no less venerable saying that "to him who does his best God does not deny his grace". The centrality and universal mediatorship of Jesus Christ is never in question and therefore taken for granted. So if there are saving activities which are not "Christian", still they can be "Christic". The author uses mostly the concept of "mediation" (of grace) and finds it to be theologically rich and sociologically universal, as it can apply to any system and structure, religious or secular. However he does not fail to speak of the "precellence" of the Catholic religion as the "complete and explicit revelation of God's message" and as "the general means of salvation" (54). This church keeps always four functions: evangelization, dialogue, defence of Gospel values and eschatological witness. Each is a valuable and legitimate function of the church.

The booklet is written in the clear style and openmindedness for which Thils is known. It represents a good theological presentation from a specific perspective, although many theologians in India would search for a theology of religions at deeper levels.

G. Gispert-Sauch, S.J.

Biography

Pilgrim and Dreamer: John Bunyan His life and Works. By Ernest W. Bacon. *Exeter, Paternoster Press*, 1983. Pp. 186. Paper back £ 4.50.

A book on Bunyan for a reader at the threshold of the twenty-first century may seem a waste of time. But even a casual perusal of this one will force us to reverse our opinion. As long as life remains a pilgrimage and people dream of a new era, *Pilgrim and Dreamer* will provide a supportive presence. The author has searched into the quality of life for a new humanity, as needed in an age morally indifferent.

"Character comes up out of the heart. There are more good minds in the world than there are good hearts. There are more clever people than good people; character, high, spotless, saintly character, is a far rarer thing in this world than talent or even genius. And yet so true it is that the world loves its own, that all men worship talent, and even bodily strength and bodily beauty, while only one here and one there either understands or values or pursues moral character, though it is the strength and beauty and the sweetness of the soul" (117). These are the words of Dr Alexander Whyte to whom this book is dedicated.

John Bunyan is known to the world as the author of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, *Grace Abounding* and many other prose marvels Rarely has a writer delved so deep into the man in Bunyan as Bacon has done Bunyan, a poor tinker's son who "never went to school to Plato or Aristotle", was led to the cross and spent the rest of his days in the school of Christ He is at one and the same time "Mr Great Heart, Mr Steadfast and Mr Valiant-for-truth" This uncanonized saint had a deep, personal love for his Saviour, Jesus the Lord Christ There was nothing but Christ before his eyes Bunyan's books are full of Christ — his welcome, his saving grace, his unshakable truth, his advocacy for sinners and so on

There was in Bunyan a deep rooted tenacity of purpose, a manliness, a strength of character that would never yield once he was convinced his purpose was right Nothing would deter him from preaching the gospel Neither words nor harassment of any kind would deviate him from his chosen path "If I was out of prison today I would preach the Gospel again tomorrow, by the help of God", he declared to the officers

He was concerned about the social problems of his day He emphasized that the masters should treat their servants as human beings and should not turn them into slaves by overworking them or underpaying them In his *Badman* he urges that in commercial dealings a man should design his neighbour's good and profit as his own He was indignant at those traders who rigged the markets by crying scarcity where there was abundance

Whatever Bunyan was, he was never sectarian in his beliefs He speaks elaborately on Christian unity. "The grace and power of the true church comes from above. The New Jerusalem is the spiritual society of the faithful. There shall be an undivided fellowship ruled by love. Its marks will be holiness, goodness and truth. Its glory is spiritual and heavenly, not worldly".

The majority of early writings were on controversial topics, whereas his later ones such as the great allegories were expressions of his understanding of Christian faith as he found it in the Scripture. For many centuries his *Pilgrim's Progress* has been a comfort and strength to multitudes of pilgrims on the heavenly road. With man's nature unchanging and the grace of God in Christ eternally the same, the book will continue to speak to the soul of man until the end of time.

There are many of his beliefs that could be questioned today Sometimes he overemphasizes divine judgement for the sake of a personal devotion to his Saviour His ideas on sin, Satan, heaven, hell are those of a past age. Bacon's book offers a critical and balanced study into the life of this great soul He honestly acknowledges that "a good deal of Bunyan's writings will not be to the taste of modern readers, but those who are willing to try will find that reading his minor works can bring much spiritual profit and illumination" The events are so presented and the dialogues so designed that this book has the fascination of a novel In a lucid and racy prose the author has written an interesting biography, after the model of Boswell's

S AUGUSTINE, S J.

A Historian and His World. A Life of Christopher Dawson 1889-1970 By Christina SCOTT *London, Sheed & Ward*, 1984 Pp 240 Price £ 15.

When I read years ago Dawson's *Progress and Religion*, *Mediaeval Religion and Other Essays* and *Religion and Culture*, I was taken up at once by the fresh approach of the author to the perennial relations between religion and culture, between Christianity and civilization, between ideas and people Dawson is indeed one of the most important historians of ideas, as well explained by James Oliver, in an appendix to this volume

In more sense than one Dawson was very much of a self-made scholar and philosopher of history As so well portrayed by his own daughter Mrs Scott, he came from an Anglican family of mixed religious background His

was a typical English family of the 19th century, deeply devout and somewhat liberal in tastes, traditional and open

There is little doubt that among the human factors of Dawson's acceptance of the Catholic Church, history played a capital role. Surely conversion was not only due to his studies, but also to his marriage with a deeply Catholic girl. Yet his vision of history and culture saw in the Catholic Church the basic factor which created European culture at its best

As an historian of culture, specially Christian culture, Christopher Dawson was a lecturer called to deliver some of those celebrated courses, so well known in U.K., so often endowed with a particular character and not seldom having a lasting influence. He actually came at the right time, between the two wars, when the Catholic Church in England was getting into its own. Dawson's influence in his country and abroad was considerable. After becoming the first professor of Roman Catholic studies in Harvard University, he lectured elsewhere in the U.S.A. during the years 1958-62. His stay and many contacts in that part of the world was fruitful and enlightening. It gave him the opportunity of reflecting on problem above all cultural

Dawson had the gift of the pen. From the one article published first in 1920 his output by the 50's was of dozens of articles, and a book almost every second year. Yet it can hardly be said that Dawson wrote too much. Quite a few posthumous works saw the light of the day between 1970 and 1981

What is the main lesson taught us by Christopher Dawson? I would personally suggest that it is the capital importance of culture and ideas for the right understanding of religious history in general and of Christianity in particular. This is why his many contributions will remain valid for many years ahead

E. R. HAMBYE, S.J.

Cum permissu Superiorum

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In This Issue

The religious form a significant proportion of the church leadership in India. They number around 80,000 and are found in all corners of India, living a bewildering variety of life-styles and committed to many forms of service Early this year 215 major superiors met in the National Assembly of the Conference of Religious, India (CRI), for a common reflection on their life of witness. They committed themselves afresh to the task of evangelization, in all its dimensions of contemplation, proclamation, dialogue and liberation. They recognised the "uncertainties, anxieties, frictions and conflicts" that often accompany their ministry, specially in the work for liberation, and affirmed their support for those engaged in this difficult task. They said that "this direction in ministry is bound to generate a new type of theological reflection and apostolic spirituality."

This month VIDYAJYOTI wants to contribute to this ongoing theological reflection. Although centered on the life of the religious, the reflections are relevant to all Christians, as the religious are not an isolated phenomenon in the life of the Church. They rather embody in a particular form of Christian life an essential element of the common Christian call.

Fr Joseph VELAMKUNNEL addresses himself to the area of formation of the religious in the context of North India His reflections will surely find application elsewhere too. In Joseph NEETILAL deals with the apostolate of the religious in the light of the needs of the people today. Fr Carlos DE MELO continues his commentary on the way in which the Code of Canon Law affects the religious, explaining in this article their relation to the Hierarchy A perceptive reader will surely see different perspectives in the contributions presented here. It is our responsibility in the Church today to avoid the one-sided either/or approach and to realise the complementarity of the various points of view in the community Only by a holistic integration at the level of faith can we live the Christian call to the full

The Document section offers what some of the most representative Catholic theologians in the country would like to see happen in theological education The Indian Theological Association thinks that in the context of a plurality of living religions, theological education "turns out to be an inter-religious and inter-faith experience of the Ultimate which enlightens all peoples revealing Itself in various ways and diverse forms".

Formation of Religious in the Context of the Indian Reality

Joseph VELAMKUNNEL, S.J.*

Introduction

FORMATION work has become very complex and demanding. The complexity is due to various factors such as the various influences affecting the young people who enter religious life today, the diverse apostolic challenges facing them, the many and rapid socio-political changes in India, the aspirations of the existing religious communities In this paper an attempt is made to clarify some of the tensions and challenges of formation The questions raised, the problems investigated and the insights shared are chiefly in the context of North India Though many of these issues are common to the formation of clergy and the religious, we focus our attention on the latter

The paper contains four parts dealing with four different areas of formation The term "Indian Reality" in this paper stands for the various cultural heritages of our people, and the social reality such as mass poverty, illiteracy, violence, exploitation, etc The knowledge acquired, the attitudes fostered, the spiritual integration sought for, are very much conditioned by the apostolic thrust of the congregation, the cultural heritage of the candidates and the social reality of the people among whom the apostolate is carried out When formation is viewed as a process, with various inter-related elements having their own specific dynamics, we perceive a lot of tensions and challenges We shall examine some of them

I CULTURAL CONFLICTS IN APOSTOLIC FORMATION

Apostolic formation is understood here as a process of preparing the trainees to face the challenges of the apostolate The purpose of mission work or apostolate is to evangelize the persons and the cultures. The vows, prayer life, community life, etc , of an apostolic congregation

*Fr. J VELAMKUNNEL teaches at the Jesuit Regional Theology Centre, St Stephen's Church, Dinapore Cantt, Patna Dt 801503 His last contribution to VIDYAJYOTI was in October 1982

draw their meaning and purpose from the apostolate. Similarly the formation of new members is oriented to the apostolate. It is not so much in the sense that they learn new skills to be put into practise later in life (e.g. methods of family catechetics), but more that the apostolic context deeply affects the growth of the person during the years of formation, psychologically and spiritually. We would like to probe into some such areas of formation where tensions seem to be present because of the cultural factors involved.

A. *Formation: Inculturation or Internationalisation ?*

A large number of the religious who work here in North India belong to international congregations. This has its advantages and its disadvantages A certain amount of conflict at the formation level seems to be unavoidable. The composition of the group is the reason for it The trainees move out of their home culture and enter an international congregation Their internationalisation can lead to a form of cultural domination. In religious life we can experience "religious colonisation" through unhealthy influences from abroad. Common visions and apostolic priorities set abroad in the perspectives of the needs of place where the mother house is located; spiritual perceptions imported for use in India, through common hymn-books, tapes, etc , certain patterns of community organisations, etc , are some of the ways whereby religious life turns into a cultural anomaly in North India Religious symbols incongruent with the local culture, like the religious habit of sisters, the cassock of priests, special crosses and other items imported from Europe, may not communicate any value in the local idiom. Language and symbols are a means of communicating ideas But more than that, they are also true vehicles of culture. What are the cultural values imparted to those in formation through the process of internationalisation ? How far does the apostolic field in which one experiences God enter into one's personal and community life ? The apostolic perspective is one way of achieving spiritual integration

In the formation houses, instructions, e g on simplicity or detachment, are imparted to the trainees What kind of symbols indicative of these values are present in the houses ? Are these symbols similar to those existing in the culture of their birth like the tribal society or the traditional Christian community ? Are these easily understandable to the people where the apostolate is exercised ? Is the particular dress of a group symbolic of the renunciation which it professes ? In traditional Hindu culture, *vairāgya*, detachment, is expressed through simpler, cheaper clothes, rather than an abundance of expensive clothes.

Conversely, certain kinds of dress, modes of behaviour, food and drink, body postures, could be considered as "worldly" and unbecoming to religious persons in a particular culture. One must ask whether we are sensitive to the value system of the people for whom we have become religious and whether our mode of living contributes to the success of the apostolate.

B. Home Culture vs International Culture

A great many of the candidates coming from the traditional families in the South have an agrarian background. There are also many vocations from the tribal society which is occupationally similar but ethnically different. Some of the trainees come from small towns in the South or North. Only a few come from large cities like Bombay or Calcutta. In general, we can say that most of the candidates for religious life are from a rural background Large numbers of them enter international orders The family background of the trainees conditions their affective life in many ways Certain characteristics call for special attention during the formation period. Traditional values need, however, to be critically examined to see which ones have to be preserved, purified or abandoned The terms of reference for this discernment should be apostolic usefulness and the changing value system of the country

1. *Obedience: cultural conflicts*

In most families the father figure leaves a deep mark on the personality of the children In the traditional families the father tends to make all the major decisions by himself Until the division of the parental property, the sons do not effectively enter into the running of the family The fear complex instilled into children from early childhood is evident in so many areas of life Even adults, often themselves heads of families, accuse themselves of having disobeyed their parents. Coming from such family background, the trainees seem to expect a father figure in religious life similar to the parents left at home. This is very obvious, especially in the early stages of formation. Some may grow out of this father-figure dependence into personal responsibility and freedom But we find, not so rarely, adults who expect the superiors to play daddy and mom for them Often enough the mode of exercising authority in religious houses confirms the trainees in their fear attitudes. Trainees may find it hard to integrate obedience and personal initiative in a mature way They may experience problems in distinguishing the function of personal discernment in undertaking a mission and the accountability to the superior in fulfilling it. The trainees will have difficulties in acquiring the spirit of personal respon-

sibility for a mission entrusted to them if they are accustomed to see authoritarian parents in the religious superiors. Without interior freedom, how could their obedience mediate God's presence at the experiential level ? But the "fear complex" seems to block the acceptance of this freedom that would enable religious to obey meaningfully.

2. *Authority: cultural domination*

Words communicate more than what they express. The "linguistic code" (with its capacity for nuances and implied meanings) used by an instructor from a particular culture may not be understood by the listeners in its intended meaning. Concepts and symbols are drawn from the world of experience, family background, aspirations transmitted by the elders in a particular community, behavioural patterns of relatives, etc. A non-tribal "formator" conditioned by his world of experience could use words, similes, examples, concepts, symbols, etc, which the tribal trainee may understand differently.

In religious congregations we find diverse ways of addressing the religious authority, each loaded with its own meaning in a given culture. We hear of Superiors, Generals, Ministers, Contact Persons, Animators, Facilitators, Co-ordinators, Mothers, Fathers, etc. In some congregations we hear of "Guss" and "Phils", "Annies" and "Maries", indicative of the free "democratic style" of government and fellowship. Whatever be the source of this last culture in Indian religious houses, independently of its merits and demerits, it tends to lead trainees from traditional families to a conflict of values. Is there a continuity between the God-experience in their lives at home, through the mediation of parental authority, and the experience of religious authority today ? In both situations, human beings mediate God Sudden ruptures in the experience of relationships seem to damage the integrated growth in spiritual life. How will a young religious be able to build on the childhood experiences of fatherhood/motherhood by relating to a "Facilitator" or a "Contact Person" in religious life ? The natural way to begin to relate to Superiors in religious life would seem to be through first transferring the early family experience to them, and then growing beyond it. Often enough the trainees find it hard to reconcile the traditional understanding of obedience brought from home with such modern values as equality, freedom, ability to enter into a free dialogue with superiors, sharing in community discernment, etc. In acquiring these modern attitudes and concepts in religious life, they seem to go through tension because they are seen as alien to the cultural patterns they grew up in. In fact the trainees are called to reconcile in themselves three sets of values: the "hero-worship" and absolute

obedience to authority (brought from their homes); "seeing God in the religious superiors" (taught in religious life); and certain democratic values (coming from the modern secular society). We cannot deny the necessity of the certain transition from the family value system to a new one in religious life. Much understanding must be shown to the trainees so that this becomes an integrative process in their lives.

From an apostolic point of view we could ask: Do lay people understand the terms used in our houses and their connotations? Are the religious part of the wider human community in such a way that their neighbours easily understand the meaningfulness of consecrated life *as it is lived?* The commitment, their life-style, the organisational mode of their communities, their value system must make sense to the outsiders, through cultural links. Only then can we say that formation integrates the religious into the local culture. If formation is making them alien, something is missing in its orientation. If the religious life is so remote from the rest of the people, that its relevance is recognised only through a laborious process of explanation, then it defeats its own purpose.

3. *Mobility and stability: cultural conflicts*

Often it is assumed that change means progress. Making progress is to be modern. Frequent changes, thus making "progress", are demanded from a desire to be modern, not to be left out of the group or abelled a conservative. A so-called "progressive" can ask to have levery liturgy or group meeting as something new. "Progressives" may even have a subtle contempt for the stability of the "conservatives", of the community. But from another point of view, e.g., that of some tribal groups, stability is a positive value, while change implies a degradation from the traditional values passed on by the ancestors. Being authentic is being faithful to the past inheritance, and this is considered a socially commendable quality. From this perspective, a tribal member may oppose frequent changes in community life, liturgy, etc. He may do so in order to preserve the true identity of the group. In formation programmes, especially in international congregations, how far do we take into account the different cultural groups and their specific world views? How far is it legitimate to ask the trainees to throw overboard all the values which have contributed to their growth as persons and communities from childhood on?

4. *Spiritual leadership and cultural factors*

In the traditional Hindu culture a Guru is one who teaches on his own authority, not in the name of another superior. The ashram

way of life is the tested and proven path to holiness. Unquestioning obedience and devotion to the Guru (*gurupāda sevā*), is a guarantee of being on the right path to God-experience. Similarly, in the tribal society the leaders have undisputed authority in almost every sphere of life. Whether a particular religious community exists among the tribals or in a Hindu milieu, the local people would understand the role of a superior in terms of their particular background. Among the religious these days there are Contact Persons, Provincials, Facilitators, Administrators, etc. The local people understand these names in terms of their value system, in their cultural categories. In their mind they assign a specific value-content to them, irrespective of the explanations offered.

In a formation house the "formator" could be teaching the trainees, coming from diverse cultural groups, authentic values of religious life: in order to live a spirit of fellowship the superior can be addressed as Phil, Mat, Guss, etc., spiritual guidance in the congregation is a common search by the guide and the trainee; dialogue is a form of governmental procedure and at the end of it all members together decide the norms and rules of the community life, etc. Obviously these values seem to go against those we mentioned above as found in a traditional Hindu or tribal society: obedience is to the Guru and not to the community; the laws governing society are set by the ancestors and enforced by the present leaders; obedience is the surest way to enlightement or to the preservation of the community, etc. In such situations of value-conflicts, the "formator" may not be communicating in depth with the trainees because both are living different world-views. There could be a subtle violence done to the trainees to bring them in line with the thinking in the congregation In the name of internationalisation superiors may be communicating transcultural values which perhaps have no emotional resonance in the hearts of the trainees and are apostolically futile because they are culturally incongruent.

Some relevant questions for us to ask could be: Does our behaviour in its affective, intellectual and social dimensions, reveal the God-experience, or His Kingdom, without having to explain and justify it to our neighbours ? Is the interior presence of God in our life and work, the supernatural dimension of our existence as religious, sufficiently evident to those who come into contact with us ? If we fail, is it because we lack depth and radicalism or because we fail to communicate in a particular cultural idiom known to the people ? Or perhaps both ?

5. Religious fellowship and secular competition

In some societies outdoing others is recognised as a positive quality — be that in secular matters, like games, studies etc., or in religious matters, like the apostolate or even the practice of virtues. The spirit of competition is socially acceptable and achievements are given a premium. Individual gains are seen as a mark of efficiency; and often enough the efficient ones are rewarded with more prestigious offices. The winners of first classes in public exams will get the kudos, others get a casual mention. A different value system seems to exist among tribals. Collective gain and sharing are socially laudable. For example, after a hunt the leader is expected to make a just distribution of the game among all the families. If he fails to do this he can be sanctioned. Fellowship and fostering of collective strength are recognised as more important values than the individualist quest for excellence. If a particular religious community encourages the spirit of competition, a tribal member may find it difficult to grasp its reasonableness from his or her background. Tension will follow.

II. Religious Formation: Alienation from the Poor

In this part we will examine the religious formation in North India from the angle of solidarity with the poor. How far does the "Indian reality" affect the formation? The formation programmes of religious congregations normally reflect the self-understanding of the Church. This self-understanding is revealed both at the theological and social levels. Hence in this part we will investigate the alienation and compensations at the religious and the social levels of the Church's life. We will then draw out some implications for the formation of the religious.

A. Ecclesial Minority Complex and Compensations

In North India the Church is numerically a small minority. Its membership is largely drawn from the socially and economically less privileged sections of the population. It does not wield any significant political power. The minority consciousness of the community seems to give rise to "religious" and "sociological" compensations.

1. Compensation at the religious level

The theology of the ordinary people is different from that of the recent official teachings of the Church, or that of the progressive theologians. The minority complex is compensated by a particular theological understanding of the Church.

Such claims are made: "the Church has the fullness of revelation" (as distinct from those who do not have it); "the Church is the light of the world" (and outside, people live in darkness); "the Church possesses the full truth" (outside her, people have only falsehood or partial truths); "her worship is truly divine" (outside her it is idol-worship), etc. Belonging to such a Church which is universal, and presumably the cause of prosperity for her adherents, compensates for the inferiority feelings of the minority group in a largely Hindu country. This way of thinking can also be rooted in a "religious colonisation" begun in the West. The religious become the symbols of the new social identity offered by the Church. The Christian community can speak proudly of its priests and sisters. The convents and parishes function successfully as service centres, even if without real solidarity with the people. The models of leadership are drawn from the secular society, and hence one need not enter into solidarity with the peoples' struggles. The witness to Jesus' love through charitable services can be offered by the Church without identification with the poor. The psychological inferiority of the group is adequately compensated by the greatness of the universal Church, the prestige of the Christian institutions, and also by the elitist life-style of the religious leaders. It is a common phenomenon among the oppressed people that they identify themselves symbolically with their leaders (the slaves with the master) or with institutions of prestige to which they themselves may not have contributed anything (a church, or a monument for the king), or with the historical successes of the ruling class (the victory of the king or of the landlord over their enemies). In a similar fashion, we hear of our ordinary laity saying that they "belong to such and such a Father" or mission; that their church or convent is the biggest building in the locality or that some of their former priests, preferably foreigners, could stop the train by just by waving a kerchief from the church veranda ! The absolutist claims of the Church and consequently her theological inability for dialogue with other religions on an equal footing seem to contain certain mechanisms to cope with the minority consciousness of the group.

2 *Compensation at the sociological level*

We have already touched upon the social function of religious leaders and Church establishments. We would like to go into the compensating role these play in our life. For the simple people, the Church institutions are symbols of growth and prestige, models, as it were, of tomorrow's prosperity.

In a rural area — in fact most of the Christians in North India are rural — brick houses carry a lot of prestige. Similarly a concrete roof with iron girders is more respectable than a thatched roof. Even persons and families are often identified as "pucka makânwâlâ" or "khapadâ kâ makânwâlâ". The cultural anomaly appears more blatant when we realise that the religious tend to have accomodations far superior to those of the landlords in rural India. So many of our houses have running water, vehicles, upholstered furniture, fans, refrigerators and some item or other brought from abroad. Those who occupy them are persons of importance. They are able to speak different languages, especially English, which is a status symbol in India The people who feel most at home with them are the social elite Their celebrations have an elitist flavour. They enjoy much more security in life than most people in the country by way of health care, old age retirement, "insurance" against hunger, strong walls and a good roof, clothes suitable for every season, etc These are some of the important items of life which preoccupy the minds of average Indians I have no intention of passing judgement on anybody The point at issue is that these conveniences, some of which have become indispensable in our lives, put us into the category of the social elite

The unnecessarily expensive buildings of ecclesiastical institutions may be psychological compensations for a failure to evolve a genuine Christian community or for set-backs in human relationships with the local people, or for the decline in the number of baptisms, etc Once the set-up is there, a fitting life-style follows. This has repercussions when evolving models for the apostolate and for the promotion of future apostles. The Christian community may expect such a life-style from their leaders; the trainees may demand it during the formation; from the point of view of effective apostolic formation, these problems need to be tackled.

B. Implications for Religious Formation

Just as entry into the Christian community can be considered a means of upward mobility for the socio-economically weaker groups, so too a religious vocation can be perceived as a privileged opportunity for joining the elite Various formative programmes, based on a particular theological understanding of the Church, strengthen this upward mobility. Some of the trainees could have personality needs which find fulfillment in belonging to the elite. Others may need the recognition of belonging to a prestigious institution or to Congregations which have high status owing to outstanding superiors or founders, or enjoy

positions of secular influence due to Cambridge schools. Candidates from a poorer background may need to be helped to become independent of such props.

A dislike for manual labour, insatiable personal needs in room, dress, university degrees, association with the social elite, a subtle disaffection for the ordinary village people; an inclination to hide one's social background or disown poor family members, etc., could indicate that the persons concerned are struggling with identity problems.

Sometimes we come across certain psychological and spiritual approaches, perhaps wrongly understood by the trainees, that enhance the elitist need. As a pattern of spiritual growth we might want a person to go through a state of "need-satisfaction", leading to "need-renunciation", and finally arriving at self-trancendence. Spiritual freedom or self-transcendence is seen as the goal that legitimizes the stages of satisfaction and renunciation. Indeed the Indian spiritual wisdom and ascetical practices seem to advocate this method. And in fact a number of religious seem to go through these phases in their personal lives. Poverty: from accumulation to renunciation and finally to detachment. Chastity: from fulfillment to self-denial and to inner freedom. Obedience: from self-assertion to blind acceptance and finally to personal commitment.

But viewed from another angle, an elitist process of growth seems to be hidden in this approach. How many of the people in India can afford to go through this path to reach the goal of spiritual liberation ? Is this not also part of the value system of a consumerist society which religious are denouncing by the radical nature of their existence ? How many religious really reach their spiritual goal of self-transcendence through the process of self-fulfilment ? The likelihood is that a large number of us will get stuck at the need-fulfilling level in our spiritual journey. If elitism is accepted as a value in religious life, we cannot promote a radical social reform meaningfully and without bringing self-contradictions into our lives. The social sciences should teach us that to achieve the goal of social commitment and to evolve an effective social methodology we need a closer identification with the oppressed.

Could psychology help us to acquire a deeper social commitment by opening up a greater freedom within ? Could it motivate us to put that freedom at the service of the poor ? Could it help to awaken persons to an experience of "God dwelling in the poor"? Perhaps a genuine contact with the poor can help us to relativise the personal needs which we are trying to fulfil as a means to self-transcendence.

III. Formation for Social Accomodation or Social Reconstruction

The climate of religious communities reflects the social and ideological currents in the Church at large. A candidate discerns her/his vocation and the possibility of its apostolic fulfillment in a given understanding of the Church's mission and of the function of religious life. The particular theological understanding of vocation also depends on the specific concept of the Church. In this part of the paper we would like to analyse two understandings of the Church's mission and the type of formation required by each of them.

A. *The Traditional Understanding of the Mission Work*

When a candidate, v.g. a boy from the traditional Catholic community, gets the inspiration to volunteer for mission work, he has no other clearly defined notion of mission than what is available in his community His motivation could be expressed in many ways: to spread the faith, to give Christ, to give the Christian faith to others, to make converts, to save souls, etc He conceives his work at the operational level as "preaching the Gospel" and forming Christian communities.[1] The love of the neighbour, inherited from the community, finds expression in serving the poor. Within the framework of this understanding, he hears the call and surrenders to God.

In the traditional understanding, the Church is, as William Frazier puts it, "the sanctuary Church"[2], a concept very different from the Vatican II expression of the Church as "sign"[3]. The principal preoccupation of the missionary Church is to increase her membership by bringing more people into her fold and establishing new Christian communities in new territories The religious are supposed to help the Church authorities in achieving this goal[4] Theologically all other works are called pre-evangelization or indirect evangelization Emotionally and theologically, the candidate's vision and activities are well integrated into a unified whole. His formation is meant to make him a fit instrument for mission work. He grows to be ever more self-aware at the motivational level. There is harmony between his "spiritual ministry" and social involvement. He finds his fulfillment in the missionary vocation.

The traditional type of formation tends to protect from the "world", helping the trainee to grow in a cult-oriented, privatised spirituality within the "sanctuary Church" He is preparing himself for bringing

1. J Neuner and J Dupuis S.J., *The Christian Faith*, nos. 1116, 1123, 1126
2. William Frazier, *Mission Trends No. 1*, p 30.
3. *LG* 1.
4. Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 69

about a spiritual change in society. Working along with the existing powers to help the oppressed, in moments of class conflict he may take sides with the establishment, or declare himself neutral. Formation does not prepare him for entering into a conflict situation. Any knowledge of oppression in society is theoretical. If change is desired, it will be through relief to the victims. Hence during the period of formation the trainees will be introduced to relief work, curative medical care, compassionate service of the victims of natural calamities, etc. Such type of formation programmes are still quite common in North India.

B. *Another Understanding of Mission Work*

According to *Evangelii Nuntiandi* evangelization means transforming persons and cultures in the light of the Gospel.[5] The role of the religious is to evangelise both the individuals and the structures.[6] The motivation is the Father's love as shared in Jesus.[7] At the operational level, priorities are made in the light of what the social sciences teach us about the problems and their causes. Ideologies supportive of radical social change are adopted. Instead of concentrating on the victims of sickness or isolated unjust actions, one concentrates on their causes. Besides revealing God's compassion through service to the victim, one seeks to reveal His love by bringing about the structural changes that will prevent similar incidents.[8] Besides the theological and philosophical analysis of the problem of injustice, one looks for the sociological and psychological factors which give rise to such patterns and social structures

One will tend to analyse the problem from the point of the victim of oppression rather that of the oppressor. For example, an incidence of rape can be looked at from many angles: that of the men who did it ("she tempted us"), or the parents of the victim ("the family is ruined"), or that of the male chauvinist observers ("dressed like that she called for it"), or that of the police and advocates who may find an occasion for making some money, or the local journalists looking for a sensational scoop, or the politicians bent on defaming the ruling party, or finally that of the victim herself. The religious could examine the incident from any of the viewpoints and arrive at different conclusions. The pain and dehumanisation will be really understood only when the event is perceived from the victim's angle. Similarly, social problems can be analysed from the point of view of the exploited or the exploiter. In

5. *Ibid.*, no 18
6. *Ibid.*, no. 19, 20.
7. *Ibid.*, no. 26.
8. Pope PAUL VI, *Octogesima Adveniens*, no. 13.

the context of the radical option for the poor, the religious will tend to examine from the suffering victims' point of view, social problems like hunger, sickness, lack of clothing, lack of drinking water, etc.

With this particular understanding of the social problems, a person's concept of the vocation to evangelize cultures characterised by injustice will be different from the one examined earlier. Suppose a particular girl hears God's call to enter religious life and to be at the service of the poor, and suppose a particular religious order has health and healing ministry as its specific charism for serving the poor. This girl discovers a resonance within her heart between her call to mission work and this particular congregation Her desire to serve the sick finds its fulfilment. Thus on the intellectual and spiritual level she becomes integrated. Suppose a rape victim is brought to the dispensary. The sister could devote her full attention to caring for the victim. She would experience God in doing this Her campassion and care would go also to the family of the victim. But through social analysis she knows that this alone is not enough More victims will be brought to her. She must do something about the causes of rape. This may mean entering into a struggle and confronting those involved in the act; it may demand efforts to change the thinking patterns of women and above all the value system of a male-dominated society. To bring about structural changes she has to conscientize the government and the general public This cannot take place purely by prayer before the Blessed Sacrament ! She is likely to think of changes in legislation and in the thinking patterns of women and men ("woman is the possession of man, for his fulfilment, woman is inferior to man"...) The sister is likely to offer prayers for the conversion of the culprit and the solace of the victim But she experiences God's love also in her struggles for changing the society's ways Spiritually she may seek greater selflessness in her motivation to serve the victim and oppose the unjust. She might even accuse herself of lack of compassion or generosity, or of anger towards the guilty Now she may rather blame herself for lack of courage to stand by the victim's rights, or to face the officials in order to demand justice.

All these experiences take place in the context of a new ideology, of a particular understanding of the function of the religious in society and the nature of evangelization Within this specific framework, she seeks to attain a certain spiritual, intellectual and psychological integration Gradually she may come to the understanding that she should move away from remedial medical care, because of its limited scope for radical changes in the health condition of the poor. She may become convinced that she is called to health edu-

cation, to improve the quality of life by better food, to awaken the people from their lethargy to claim their rights in medical centres like hospitals, etc. The original religious vocation remains the same, but reflection on reality from the suffering person's point of view and acceptance of a supportive ideology for social change has led her to a new understanding of her mission.

C *Approaches in Formation*

Given this understanding of evangelization and the ideological commitment to the poor, a religious congregation will have to shape its formation programme in function of its apostolic goals. In our formation programmes, do we really help the trainees to see the link between evangelization and structural changes ? Do we help them to go beyond the particular instances of injustices and explore their causes ? Do we also help the trainees to examine the hidden areas of the subconscious and their subtle motives for the service of the poor ? Sometimes we may transfer the anger at and hatred of sinful structures to those who enjoy the benefits of such structures.

A radical option for the poor will imply some involvement, maybe limited but real, to give adequate expression to one's commitment. To profess radical commitment to the poor and take a casual walk through the nearest Harijan village (probably discussing in English the problem of universal poverty or the latest document on religious poverty !) only deadens the human spirit in its search for transcendence. Such a life pattern can only lead to a weakening of the commitment itself. We keep alive the flame of commitment through a periodic involvement of some duration in the lives of the poor, or by frequent actions of certain depth on their behalf. This may awaken us from the affective lethargy towards the poor so often experienced in our formation houses. The general orientation of life needs to be made radical through a growing identification with the suffering men and women of our society. The mental and affective influences operating in formation must be focussed according to the point of view of the poor. This must be constantly kept alive through prayer and contact with the reality of actual oppression.

If we are training the young religious for a prophetic mission, for "affecting and as it were upsetting, through the power of the Gospel"[9] the social structures, or as Jeremias puts it, "to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant. . ." (Jer 1 : 10), then the value system in the formation houses needs to be examined.

9. Pope PAUL VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 19.

Nothing is without value content in a formation house. The traditional approaches to evangelization offered a type of formation. But if the apostolic requirement is today different, then we need to be trained in a new type of value system. For example, who are considered the ideal religious in a community, whom the seniors would commend as models for imitation ? Which are the virtues that score high ? Do we consider the following as marks of a good religious: a spirit of questioning, resistance, a critical stand, protest, revolt, violence, violation of rules, etc.? Or do we tend to accept a different set of virtues as adornment for an ideal religious: humility, compassion, obedience, conformity, submission, fidelity to rules, abandonment to God and to superiors, silence, patience, in suffering, etc.? Both series have their sanctions and rewards. Which of these need to be cultivated for a prophetic mission today ? If our formation is aimed at training apostles to announce social justice and denounce social injustice we will have to foster the first category as essential.

In fact, silence or protest, obedience or violation, are neutral in themselves. They become a virtue or a vice depending on the context. Obeying an unjust sinful law or an oppressive government is not a virtue. Protest against a despot need not be a vice. The method of instruction often used in our formation houses seems to affect the value content of formation, though not necessarily its cognitive content. Are the formation personnel creating an atmosphere of freedom to promote creativity in thinking ? If not, how are the future apostles going to be innovators in and reformers of an unjust society ? If they have been trained to keep unqualified silence before injustice, and such silence is rewarded with "posts" or offices during the period of formation, how will they ever raise their voice on behalf of the oppressed ? If they have been always told that the spirit of criticism is unbecoming to a religious person, how could we expect them to be courageous apostles who critically analyse and interpret the happenings around and take appropriate measures ? Often we accept in principle that criticism is needed, but add the cautious adjective "constructive", in order to soften it. But we hardly disapprove of the "destructive silence" of religious. Destructive criticism as well as destructive silence need to be condemned as unbecoming to a prophet, and constructive criticism and protest need to be fostered. Apostolic formation implies helping the trainees to cultivate those personality traits which are essential for the evangelisation of the Indian society where hunger, violence, oppression, illiteracy, dehumanise crores of people. The value system of the formation houses and the socially significant "formators" affect greatly the emotive and cognitive quality of the formation programmes.

IV. Formation Personnel and Faith Experience

For the formation personnel, the work of formation is the specific apostolate entrusted to them. It is complex and challenging. The spiritual life of the "formators" is inextricably linked up with the work of formation and the lives of those in their charge.

A. *Interplay of Freedom and Slavery*

The inner freedom of the "formators" plays an important part in awakening freedom in others. Their limitations impinge on the growth of others too. The struggle not to give up on persons even if efforts are apparently useless can be a great purification of the heart. It is difficult to continue to trust, in spite of the immediate evidence against, and to try to awaken faith in the weak. The borderline between genuine weakness and unjustified lethargy is often indistinct and narrow. Yet continuing to trust people and their motives is perhaps the most formative approach. The commitment to the welfare of the congregation and the responsibility towards its apostolic goal should be the guiding principle in making up one's mind about a trainee's response and aptitudes. We need inner freedom to live through ambiguities regarding the trainees, knowing that God will reveal the truth in time Has one's opinion been arrived at as the fruit of a genuine discernment, or as the result of spontaneous reactions to something in the trainee ? The acquisition of this inner freedom demands that the "formators" go through the fire of a mystical purification. The mysterious dark night of faith will open up glimpses of true wisdom only if we accept this cleansing by fire and the Spirit. The emptying of the ego, a share in the death of the Lord, is an inescapable experience in the formation work. The trainees are the agents who mediate this mystery of death and life.

Formation personnel must be aware of their personal psychological needs and the danger of making use of the trainees for meeting them in subtle ways. For example a person may have an almost pathological need to be a "success" in life, and his sphere of work happens to be formation. He may see his success in the various achievements of the trainees — academic, athletic, spiritual, etc. This could be the way of boosting his sagging self-image. The "formator"'s unexplored personal need to dominate others may also find ample scope in the early stages of formation. The weaker ones in a community could very well be martyred on the anvil of psychological urges. One needs real courage and wisdom to resist the temptation to manipulate the weaklings of a group and to win their affection for one's

languishing heart. The "formator" must have her/his "fixed deposit" elsewhere, and learn to be honest about emotional needs and to seek their fulfilment in legitimate ways.

B. *Formation and the Paschal Mystery*

For the formation personnel the death and resurrection of Jesus is mediated through the trainee. They need the spiritual sense to perceive and accept this gracefully. They cannot escape life's inevitable cross in the apostolate of formation, nor can they forego the redemptive aspect of suffering in the life with the trainees. One must be sensitive to the self-emptying of Jesus as it unfolds itself in the work of formation. Where do they experience the death of Jesus ? Have they recognised the pattern of death and resurrection in their apostolate with the trainees ? How far have they consciously, in freedom and joy, accepted this mystery ? They require freedom to accept gracefully the ingratitude and the thoughtlessness of those in formation, as well as whatever encouragement comes along the way (cf. Lk 17. 10). The "formators" can make no claims of being the sole guardians of the spirit of the congregation, or of any esoteric knowledge about the true method of formation. Sinners themselves, they are trying to aid others, through their search for authenticity and spiritual freedom, to become agents of social change in India. "Formators" will learn wisdom by remaining silent at the crossroads between their own weakness, spiritual misery and impatience to be better and the attitudes of the trainees. Instead of arrogant and self-righteous demands made on the trainees to do better, formation personnel need the spiritual freedom to wait in patience and struggle with them in humility

For the "formators" the liberating experience of God with His supreme gift of freedom is mediated through the trainees The "formators" need the inner freedom to wait for God's time and His ways of shaping human destinies. In the final analysis they must leave the whole burden of formation in God's hands — the divine hands that shaped the primordial clay into human figures in His image. Does He not do the same for his daughters and sons today and thus continue His work of recreating the future of the masses of India ? The "formators" need to mortify the urge to see instant growth, the folly of expecting the speed of technological culture in human transformation ! The God who travelled forty years through the desert-land, waking up every morning to find his wayward people slogging through the sand, has more than enough patience to wait for them ! Days and nights passed with seemingly no progress made. Yet they reached the goal.

The supreme grace is to disappear as an "object of interest" from the "finished product" of formation, and to make no claims on the trainees' future. We need to keep in mind that in the midst of the waves of success and failures, the "formators" are called upon to announce to everyone as disinterestedly as possible, that God has a preferential love for the poor. Like Jesus, one will have to die announcing this good news. Perhaps some will hear it more distinctly from God Himself through the dying sigh of one's heart.... Then the Paschal Mystery will shine in all its resplendent beauty.

Participation of the Religious in the Mission of the Indian Church

Joseph NEETILAL*

Our Problem

THE religious are "in the vanguard of the mission of the Church" (EN 69). They are encouraged to be "enterprising in their undertakings and initiatives" in keeping with the charismatic and prophetic nature of religious life itself Sensitivity to the historical context of the country within which the Church fulfils her mission is a constant factor in religious renewal By their very vocation the religious are called to respond to the demands of the context in which they live and work.

In the Indian Church today we have a good many religious, belonging to different congregations, who try to realise their religious commitment through participation in various action groups and human rights movements In fidelity to their religious vocation and in response to the call of the Synod of Bishops in 1971, they are trying to meet the main concerns of our people by sharing in their struggle for justice. Thus they endeavour to follow Christ more radically and to make their religious life more meaningful But almost all of these religious meet with opposition from the establishment Church and their own religious superiors and even communities. "Fidelity to the charism of the Founder" is the weapon often used against them These two elements — (1) a change of perspectives in response to the demands of the context today, and (2) fidelity to the charism of the Founder often comes into conflict especially in matters related to the understanding and practice of our mission How can we respond to such a conflict ?

As the Roman document *Religious and Human Promotion* suggests, a solution to this problem perhaps lies in (1) a radical change of mentality and attitudes, (2) a genuine contextualization through contact with the realities of the people, and (3) a dynamic and renewed fidelity

*Fr Joseph NEETILAL, a doctor in Theology from Innsbruck, is Assistant Superior General of the Indian Missionary Society (IMS), Varanasi, but lives in a village in Bihar involved in the JP movement and tries to build up village communities.

to the charism of the Founder. If the religious congregations do not meet the major concerns of our people, they are not relevant. We have beautiful documents of the Magisterium and many seminar conclusions, which not only raise the question of the relevance of our service but also propose many valuable suggestions. But they remain on paper. No collective body, neither the CBCI nor the CRI[1], is ready or willing to act on them. I only hope that the CRI will give serious thought to this problem. In this context I would like to offer a few reflections, quite in keeping with the collective thinking of the Indian Church.

One mission

The Church has only one mission here on earth. This one mission is to be a sign of God's Kingdom to the world and to be at the service of the world. This belongs to her very essence. She has no other reason for existence. This one mission to be a salvific sign at the service of the world is her ministry. The various ministries in the Church are only various specifications of this one ministry or mission. The Church is for the people The context of the people will very much determine the type of service the Church can and must render to them in a meaningful way

The goal of the mission of the Church is the realisation of the Kingdom of God The Church is not the Kingdom; she is only a means. The Kingdom of God, which was the central message of Jesus' proclamation, implies essentially a fellowship and communion among people who accept the Fatherhood and Reign of God. An option for freedom, equality and justice for all people is a necessary condition to belong to this Kingdom. The call to the Kingdom is basically communitarian. A purely individualistic understanding and practice of religion is not sufficient To accept certain principles and values is not sufficient, or to develop a kind of personal relationship with Christ through the reception of the sacraments and other devotional practices. To do only this is to miss the essential dimension of community and fellowship implied in the Kingdom Jesus proclaimed. Our commitment to the Kingdom consists in our response to the love of God which must find its concrete expression in our love for and fellowship with the people. Thus we can say that the Kingdom of God is already begun and is increasingly realised in the world whenever people make a radical option for freedom, justice, equality and fellowship.

1. The *Catholic Bishops' Conference of India* and *Conference of Religious, India*, respectively.

All that the Church does in fulfilment of this mission to realise God's kingdom in this world is evangelisation. This implies the transformation of humanity from within, with the Good News of Jesus Christ. The purpose of evangelisation is not merely numerical growth or geographic extension of the Church. Evangelization involves primarily a qualitative change in humanity through a thorough conversion of the conscience of people. This is manifested through their lives and activities in their particular cultures and concrete situations (EN, 18-19).

In order to accomplish this mission, the Church must scrutinize the signs of the times and interpret them in the light of the Gospel. She must respond to the challenges, problems and demands of a particular context and make herself credible through her action and involvement in society. Here a few questions arise. Are there groups other than the Church, working for the same purpose of realising God's Kingdom ? What role do the other religions have in this task ? Must the Church work with them or against them ? Is there any common concern shared by all the religions, or only differences among them ?

The Function of the Religious in the Church

In virtue of their vocation, the religious are called to a radical living of the Gospel. They are to be prophets in the Church and for the people. They fearlessly announce the Kingdom of God and its demands and denounce everything that is in contrast with the Kingdom values of justice, fellowship and freedom. In the Church the religious spearhead renewal. Their prophetic charism is different from the charism of authority in the Church. These are distinct, but complement each other for the common good Their relationship is interdependent and dialogical. The dynamics of the Church consists in a healthy tension between the charism of prophecy and the charism of authority. Neither of them must be ignored or controlled by the other.

Various religious congregations in the Church carry out the one mission of the Church — a qualitative transformation of this world into the Kingdom of God — in different ways, stressing one or the other aspect of this mission. Their differences are secondary. They all share the essentials of religious life: their commitment to a radical living of the Gospel, their life of poverty, chastity and obedience, their leading prophetic commitment to the people, especially the poor and the oppressed, and their collective witness as community.

The purpose of religious life in a congregation is an effective participation in the mission of Christ for the people. Religious life

and service to the people are linked together. Neither the Church nor the congregations are for themselves. They are for the people. Neither religious life nor the Church is an end in itself. Both are means for the realisation of God's Kingdom, for the transformation of peoples and of the world. The practice of the virtue of religion or the growth in a personal relationship with Christ is not the ultimate aim of religious life. This religiosity is definitely important, but can be achieved outside of religious life. On the other hand, a religious in his or her life of commitment to the mission of Christ for the people is expected to attain a deeper religiosity and a personal relationship with Christ. The religious fulfil their prophetic function in their commitment to the people. The people's sorrows, concerns and struggles cannot be foreign to the religious, if they are to be prophets of the people. Struggling for the cause of the people belongs to the very core of prophetic religious life The religious congregations today become relevant and alive in the measure in which they are able to commit themselves for the people and lead a life in solidarity with them in their struggles, as Jesus did.

The Religious Vows

Through the profession of poverty, chastity and obedience in a congregation the religious want to make themselves totally free and available for God and His people, and thus try to achieve for themselves and for others a conversion to God and a transformation from selfishness to total love of others. This is the purpose of the religious vows.

The vow of poverty means not only a spirit of detachment in the possession of things with the permission of the superiors, nor renunciation for the sake of renunciation. Poverty means real experience of want and not possessing things which are not necessary, as an expression of solidarity with the have-nots. Freed from the care and solicitude for temporal goods and depending on their communities for their needs, the religious, following Jesus Christ who was poor, want to devote themselves to the poor. In a radical fidelity to the teachings and activities of Jesus of Nazareth, they want to reenact the Gospel story of Jesus' option for the poor, the sick, the disabled, the outcaste, the down-trodden and the oppressed. Through their life of solidarity and identification with these underprivileged the religious win the acceptance of these people for action. This vow of poverty which implies commitment to the poor must enable the religious to side with the poor and to participate in their struggle for a just social order.

The vow of chastity is not a denial of love and fellowship, but an invitation to universal love, free from an exclusive love for a particular person of the opposite sex. A celibate life disposes the religious to undertake commitments that are risky and dangerous for the sake of the people. The experience of inner solitude, lived by the religious for the sake of the Kingdom of God, must energize them for a commitment especially to the cause of those who are deprived of an experience of love and fellowship. Such is the case of millions of the poor and underprivileged of our country, whose human dignity is violated, whose freedom is curtailed and whose aspiration for love is frustrated by the existing economic and socio-political situation. The experience of personal fellowship and love, which the religious have in their relationship with Christ and in their communities, enables them to reach out and to make themselves enthusiastically available to others.

The vow of obedience demands from the religious an unconditional surrender of themselves to God We owe obedience to God rather than to men and man-made laws (Acts 4.18-19). Obedience is not mere conformity to laws Jesus Himself did not follow the laws concerning the sabbath, ablutions and fasts Obedience also is not submission to power Jesus refused to submit to power. As is clear from the New Testament, Jesus made an unambiguous and uncompromising option for the oppressed and stood by them, defying social, political and even religious authorities and challenging their oppressive demands and the structures which reduced people to poverty and misery.

Obedience would imply that we recognise and follow God's voice and His truth. It is our response to God who reveals Himself to us in various ways. We discover God's voice in the events of history and within the burning situations of oppression, suffering and the struggles of the people. These events and situations ultimately are related to our commitment to the values of God's Kingdom revealed to us through Jesus Christ. Obedience implies taking our stand by God's side. As God takes side with the poor and liberates the oppressed in the history of salvation, our obedience demands that we make our own God's option for the poor.

Following Jesus, the religious commit themselves to the God of love and justice for the sake of the people. They must be obedient even unto death, as Jesus who lived with the poor and the oppressed and did lay down his life for them in defiance of the social, religious and political powers of his time. The religious owe obedience to the Church through their congregations. This obedience becomes meaningful and praiseworthy in the measure in which the Church and the

congregations inspire and enable their members to follow Jesus through a life of commitment and death for the people. Their security and future should be left to their Lord alone.

Our allegiance to God, Jesus, the Church and congregations for the sake of the people belongs to the very prophetic nature of religious life. Commitment to the people and their struggle for the realisation of God's Kingdom is the central issue in religious life. No religious need permission to be chaste and poor, to obey, to love and to follow Christ in a radical way. This is their vocation. Why should they need a permission from anywhere for concretely living out this call which must find its expression in an option and action for the poor in a particular context ?

Credibility of the Indian Church

The Synod of Bishops of 1971 declared· "Unless the Christian message of love and justice shows its effectiveness through action in the cause of justice in the world, it will only with difficulty gain credibility with the men of our time" The Church in India stands in need of credibility. The marvellous services of the Church to the elite especially through the educational institutions and health services are well recognised. But the Church has on the whole no impact on the masses in Indian society. The Christians themselves are marginalized. The Church does not seem to be credible enough to ordinary Indians. In the film media Christians are often projected as immoral. In spite of the higher educational standards and other resources enjoyed by the Church, her contribution to solve national problems of the country is minimal. She is preoccupied with minority rights, when the fundamental rights of the people in general are in many ways violated. To strengthen the immature democracy of our country, to defend the human rights, to prevent communal riots, to ensure national integration, to plan out, analyse, study and discover various possibilities for the creation of a just economic, social and political order, the Church has not been able to do much. What are the reasons for her failure in this prophetic involvement in society ? What credibility do the religious congregations give to the Church, taking into consideration that they have the charism of a prophetic and dynamic mission ?

Contextualisation

In order to make themselves credible and relevant, the religious must experience a radical change of mentality and attitude. This is only possible if they face the reality of the Indian masses. A ghetto life unconcerned with this context in which they live and a pre-occupation

with their own institutional security and self-growth prevent religious from indentifying themselves with the masses. For example, no amount of talking about the need of a preferential option for the poor will be effective in a self-centred congregation. Such an option can be made concrete and effective only by concretely living and sharing the conditions of the poor and by working for and with them. But this is not easy. It involves risks and dangers to the security of the religious. A good understanding of how a society functions and familiarity with the tools of social analysis are required to strengthen one's motivation to share the life of the poor and to be able to work for the transformation of the society not only at the grass roots level but also at the macro level. Very often a static understanding of the "charism of the Founder" becomes one of the biggest obstacles for a religious to come closer to the people and to share their concerns actively.

Change of Perspectives

Within her history the Church has changed her attitudes as a result of her confrontation with the world We have experienced a shift of emphasis in the Church's self-understanding after Vatican II. In her relationship with the world there is a shift of emphasis from inwardness and aloofness to outwardness and openness. The Church is no more a triumphalistic perfect society but a pilgrim community of faith The stress today is not so much on preaching as on dialogue A spirit of service and mutual understanding takes the place of conquest and confrontation with the world. There is a change of perspectives also in her doctrines and values The stress is no more on the unchangeable deposit of faith and frozen dogmas but on a progressive understanding of faith and on development of dogma Orthopraxis is more important than orthodoxy.

Within this context of change of perspectives in the Church, neither revelation in the Bible nor the constitutions of a religious congregation and the charism of its Founder can be understood in a fundamentalist sense Their contextual character must be taken into consideration. They are to be interpreted and contextualised in a dynamic way.

Founders' Charism

I believe no religious community in a local Church, whatever may be its particular charism, can ignore or set aside the priorities already set by the Church and demanded by the changing situations. The religious congregations participate in the common mission of the Church by helping her to set priorities according to the needs and

demands of the context. They make all possible contributions towards the realisation of these well thought-out priorities, even while living their own particular charisms. The particular charism of a congregation cannot be independent of the general trend and priorities in the mission of the Church in a particular context. Charisms of different congregations differ. But we need to dwell on what is common to all of them. Prophetic confrontation with the total context of today is one of the basic requirements common to all of them.

Priorities are determined by the context. They change from time to time. The Church in India cannot become effective if the numerous congregations, unmindful of the priorities set by the Church, remain obstinately attached to the original charism formulated in a different context. If they do so, they betray their religious vocation of being creative and prophetic in the Church.

Charisms of the Congregations must meet the needs of the people. Only then are they relevant. Take, for example, the charism of some Congregations for educational or health services which is expressed in conducting institutions primarily for the benefit of the elite: in the context of a global understanding of the option of the Church for the poor, unless this charism is geared to the demands of the time, it becomes counter-productive and defeats the objectives of the Church. Unfortunately this is what is happening. Attachment to the charisms becomes an easy excuse for the *status quo*.

In the history of the Church we see that missionary congregations of both men and women were founded by great people These Founders came from different countries and situations of the past But a missionary spirit and zeal for souls were common to all of them. The congregations founded by them inherited the charism of being pioneers in "direct mission work". This meant direct preaching of Christ to the non-Christians and making them members of the Church to ensure their salvation. This vision corresponded to the time and context of these Founders. At that time the Church was understood to be identical with the Kingdom of God. In those days mission work meant working for the extension of the Church. Accordingly, faithful to their charism the congregations were engaged in direct mission work by setting up mission stations in various non-Christian areas. This was and is generally considered to be pioneering mission work.

Such an understanding of mission work is being questioned today. After the Vatican II in many of the congregations, we experience some kind of ideological struggle. Many individual members and congregations have come to accept the broader understanding of

evangelization given in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* nos. 18-19. For them "pioneer mission work" would imply an enterprising attitude and activity involving originality and initiative in everything that is really evangelizing. But an attachment to the Founder's charism and a sense of insecurity with regard to the future of their missionary involvement prevent the members of many congregations from adopting the broader vision of evangelisation proposed by *Evangelii Nuntiandi* and opting for a pioneering life. In the name of the charism of the Founder and out of fear of a change of perspective in the congregation, the members easily reject today's concerns such as "action on behalf of social justice and participation in the transformation of the world" which the Synod of Bishops proclaimed twelve years ago as a constituent dimension of evangelisation. There are many sincere and committed missionaries who feel that a genuine dialogue and living together with non-Christians, and even action on behalf of justice in collaboration with the wider community, go against their religious and missionary vocation to do "direct mission work" according to the mind of their Founders. Their attention is centered on the perfection of their religious life within the congregation. Religious life becomes for them an end in itself. Thus the charism of the Founder can function as something which blocks attempts at renewal.

In fact the charism of the Founder does not stand against renewal in a congregation. It is only used as an excuse to hide the anxieties and uncertainties implied in any change. For it is today generally accepted that the rules of interpretation and contextualisation applied to the Scriptures must also be applied to the constitutions of the congregations and their understanding of charisms. Our fidelity to the charism must be dynamic and contextual. The real issue here is the sense of insecurity and discomfort, the risks and dangers implied in the radical living of our prophetic religious commitment to God and to His people

This commitment is something common to all the active religious congregations. Their common function in India today would be their creative participation in the mission of the Indian Church in meeting the main concerns and challenges of the people. Analysing the Indian context in its totality they must in a common effort help the Church to discern the main demands of the Indian situation and to set priorities of action accordingly. They must function as agents of change for the transformation of Indian society into the Kingdom of God. To achieve this, more than anything else we need today on the part of the religious a life of genuine praxis expressed in a committed solidarity with the poor. This would mean sharing their life, their problems, their concerns and

aspirations, their risks, struggles and insecurities. But the traditional life-style in religious congregations protects them from all these insecurities and keeps them safe within the compound walls of religious houses or mission stations. No real change or renewal of religious life is possible, unless changes suitable to the Indian context take place in the manner of life of the congregations.

Pastoral Theology

Letting Go Letting God Retreat and Renewal Themes By Joe CURRIE, S.J. *Bangalore, Asian Trading Corporation*, 1984 Pp 473 Rs 60

In this book Fr Joe Currie has made a valuable contribution to Church renewal In four parts the book deals with twenty themes of prayer, around the areas of spiritual freedom, discernment, personal vocation and committed response There are two appendices, one a Discernment Chart and the other an explanation of the role of the Director in retreats

The elaboration of each of the themes is theologically deep, spiritually insightful and pastorally down to earth The author's own vast experience in directing individual and group retreats, and his knowledge of pastoral problems and of their psychological and spiritual remedies come through clearly to the attentive reader The personal as well as the social imperatives of our faith are clearly articulated The book contains many valuable helps for prayer and spiritual renewal, and provides excellent aids for building up a community spirit and a common vision in religious groups. The charts clearly illustrate and summarise many of the ideas expressed by the author They are a help in understanding the inter-relationship of many of the themes explained.

This is a good book for priests' residences and religious houses, and for Christian homes as well. Those men and women who are interested in responding in depth to the challenges of faith will find here many helps to face their lives meaningfully and constructively, provided they read these pages prayerfully and reflect on the insights gained.

A. PUTHUMANA, S.J.

Consecrated Life in the New Code: The Religious, II

Dependence on the Hierarchy

Carlos M DE MELO, S.J.

WE continue our presentation of and comments on the canons of the new Code on the Religious. We had concluded our last article[1] reviewing the chapter of the Code which deals with "Governance of Institutes". Government means authority. The present article takes up for consideration the canons that deal with the various instances of ecclesiastical authority on which religious institutes depend.

"You are religious in the Church and for the Church"— these words were addressed by Pope Paul VI to religious superiors assembled at Rome, 6 October 1976. We have already sufficiently highlighted this ecclesial dimension of the consecrated life in our previous articles. It is evident that such a life cannot be properly understood and lived except in the context of the redeemed and redeeming community founded by Jesus Christ, the Saviour of men. Echoing the teachings of Vatican II, the Code reminds us that consecrated life belongs to the life and holiness of the Church (c 574 § 1). Its members are those among the Christian faithful who are specially called by God to this state so that "they may benefit from a special gift in the life of the Church and contribute to its saving mission according to the purpose and spirit of each institute" (c. 574 § 2).

The Church in turn receives these evangelical counsels based on the teaching and example of Christ as a "divine gift" which she has to preserve and foster (cf. c 575) Charisms, as St Paul teaches us, are subject to the discerning mission of the hierarchical Church. It follows from this that it is part of the hierarchy's duty to critically evaluate these gifts, that is to say, "to interpret the evangelical counsels, to legislate for their practice and, by canonical approval, to constitute the stable forms of living which arise from them" (c. 576). This she does without however infringing the rightful autonomy of these institutes, once they are constituted as such (cf. c. 586). On the contrary,

1. The Religious in the New Code, *Vidyajyoti*, June-July, 1984, pp. 295-313.

the local Ordinaries have the responsibility of preserving and safeguarding their autonomy (c. 586 § 2) in such wise that they "grow and flourish according to the spirit of their founders and to their sound traditions" (c. 576).

Accordingly, in the present article we shall indicate as clearly as we can the various cases, instances and areas in which, according to the new Code, competent authority is called upon to exercise its mission of discernment, service and guidance vis-a-vis the institutes of consecrated life, and particularly, the religious. By "competent authority" we mean either the Holy See, or the local Bishop, or the internal hierarchy of the institute, as the case may be. We shall consider each of these in turn.

1. *The Holy See*

Though not forming part of the essential juridical structure of the Church, religious life has its place at the very heart of the Church's life (cf. LG 44). One after another the recent Popes and the Council have made this point quite clear in their various pronouncements regarding the life of the evangelical counsels. To quote only one among them, the late Pope Paul VI, "the Church cannot do without religious, that is, without the witness of the love whereby Christ pursues men and which completely transcends nature, nor can the world be deprived of these lights without detriment to itself". "For this reason — he continued — the said Church bears witness to her high esteem for them, encompasses them with constant love, and does not fail to be at their side to direct them along the right path".[2] The same great Pope's personal regard for the religious was well known and was publicly expressed on various occasions, as for instance, in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelica Testificatio* of the 29 June 1971, in which he said: "Would you could mentally grasp the enormous esteem and affection with which we pursue you in the name of Christ Jesus" (n. 4). It is therefore quite normal that the one who holds the supreme authority in the Church should be particularly solicitous about the preservation, progress and ongoing development of religious life in the Church.

All religious institutes, for the very reason that they are wholly dedicated to the service of God and placed likewise at the service of the universal needs of the Church, are subject in a more particular manner to the care and authority of its supreme Head. He is also their highest superior as religious, and to him they are bound also by their vow of obedience (c. 590). Consequently, the same supreme

2. Paul VI, Allocation to religious superiors, in Rome, 25 May, 1973 (*Canon Law Digest*, 8, p. 300).

authority can withdraw any institute from the jurisdiction of the local bishop and place it under its own direct control or that of any other authority of his choice. All this the Pope can do by virtue of his primacy over the universal Church and in attention to the wider needs of the same (c. 591). Institutes of pontifical right are in this way under the direct and exclusive authority of the Holy See with regard to their internal life and discipline (c. 593), without prejudice to their legitimate autonomy regarding their own patrimony and peculiar way of life (c. 586).

No institute of consecrated life can obtain legal existence in the Church except by an explicit authorization from the Holy See. This means that either it is Rome itself that erects an institute or — what is ordinarily the case — it is the local bishop who does so, but only after he has received from Rome the required *Nihil Obstat* (c. 579).[3]

It sometimes happens that certain religious communities or monasteries give signs of old age and decay and offer little hopes of a revival and rejuvenation The conciliar decree *Perfectae Caritatis* (n. 22) suggests that they should be forbidden to accept more novices. This measure may appear at first sight too severe, yet it may be the only way to prevent generous young people from offering themselves to God in such communities and thereby being exposed to being deprived of the support their generosity needs in their striving after Christian perfection and their dedicated service of their fellow brothers and sisters Another possibility proposed by the decree is to merge such institutes with a more vigorous and flourishing community or monastery animated by a similar spirit and pursuing the same or similar aims.

3 The following documents should be forwarded to Rome together with the petition
1) Name and surname in the world and in religion of the founder or foundress as well as of the first superior or superioress general, together with a short sketch of their lives
2) A historico-juridical report of the group from its beginning
3) Two copies of its book of prayers, its book of ceremonies, and its book of customs, if such are in use among the membership
4) Photographs of the religious habit for the novices and for the professed
5) Six copies of the text of the constitutions drawn up for it as an institute of diocesan law or as an institute of pontifical law
6) Numerical prospectus (statistics) of the members and of the houses of the group. If they are diffused through many dioceses, the ordinaries of those dioceses should be instructed to send testimonials directly to this S Congregation.
7) Declaration on the following points (a) At the foundation of the group or in its history, have there been extraordinary events such as visions and the like ?
(b) What special devotions and what special exercises of piety are given preference ?
(c) Is there in the diocese another institute with the same name and with the same special purpose ?

Furthermore, the sum of 150 U.S dollars should be sent to this S. Department for the necessary expenses which, when the business is completed, will be defined in detail.

(S.C. for Religious and Secular Institutes, 1970, cf. CLD 7, p. 458).

by dying and losing its identity such an institute really saves itself. Decision about such unions rests with the Holy See, after consultation with the appropriate Ordinaries (c. 582).

Both *Perfectae Caritatis* and the Code speak also of the union of two existing institutes into a third, a new institute. Such fusions between originally distinct institutes require, if they are to succeed, a careful preparation, spiritual and psychological, in all those affected by them, else they may give rise to serious problems and result in permanent unhappiness. They should therefore be brought about only after an accurate study of the situation, of the pros and cons, of the good of the Church and of the individual members concerned. The well known juridical principle "*quod tangit omnes, ut singulos, ab omnibus probari debet*" (things touching all, as individuals, must be approved by all) has its application here. Every member has therefore to be consulted and every one's freedom must be duly respected. The *Motu Proprio Ecclesiae Sanctae* lays down a few norms or criteria helpful in forming a judgement about the advisability — or otherwise - of promoting such unions such as "the small number of religious in proportion to the age of the institute or monastery, the lack of candidates over a period of several years, the advanced age of the majority of its members" In any case, justice and charity must by all means be preserved (Part II, nn 39-41).

The Holy See alone has the right to suppress an institute once it has been lawfully erected, even if only of the diocesan right (c 516 § 2); or to suppress the *only house* of an institute, pontifical or diocesan (c. 616 § 2) or an autonomous monastery of nuns (c 616 § 4). In all these cases, it is Rome again that decides about the destination to be given to the respective funds or goods belonging to the institutes in question, taking into account the stipulations of the constitutions as well as the intentions of the founders or donors which have to be respected and safeguarded, and the agreements entered into with them.

The approval of *new forms* of consecrated life belongs exclusively to the Holy See (c. 605). During the discussion of this canon one member of the Commission objected in the name of decentralization that the bishops ought not to be deprived of their rights in this matter. The text however was maintained as it was for two reasons: 1. that the canon distinguished well enough what belonged to the bishop and what was reserved to the Pope; 2. that it was not a question of approval of new institutes as such but of "new forms" of consecrated life, that is to say, something different from both religious and secular institutes.[4]

4. *Communicationes* XV (1983), n. 1, p. 67.

Finally, besides permission from the competent religious superior, that of the Holy See is also required for every financial transaction (in goods or money) involving an amount beyond that fixed by Rome for any particular region or country[5]; or for the alienation of ex-voto gifts made to the Church, or of other objects particularly valuable for reasons of art or history. In this same matter autonomous monasteries (*cf*. c. 615) and diocesan institutes need, besides, the consent of the local bishop.

There is another area where recourse to Rome is often obligatory that of the separation from an institute, exclaustration or secularization. We shall treat this matter when we come to that particular section of the Code.

A final remark. Corresponding to the special relationship that exists between the institutes of consecrated life and the Apostolic See it is the duty on the part of these institutes to send to Rome an official report of their status at regular intervals. The 1917 Code prescribed for the pontifical institutes a quinquennial report (c. 510). During the Council, and immediately after, during the years of experimentation, the practice was temporarily dropped. The new Code requires again of *all* the institutes of consecrated life, inclusive the diocesan, a brief report of their status and life, at the times and in the manner determined by the Holy See (c. 592)

2. *The Local Bishop*

Turning our thoughts now to the relationship between religious and the local bishops, we are immediately reminded of the fact that from the early beginnings of monasticism down to almost our own times, the Church's pilgrimage in the world has been painfully marred by frequent rivalries and jealousies, misunderstandings and oppositions, tensions and quarrels between the disciples of Christ, and — strange but true !— between the religious and the local ecclesiastical authority: between the religious, who by rule are obliged to tend to perfection (*in statu perfectionis acquirendae*), and the bishops who are said to be in the state of a perfection that has already been attained (*in statu perfectionis acquisitae*). It is a sad commentary on the weakness inherent to our fallen human nature that neither the avowed tendency towards the attainment of perfection on the one side, nor the awareness and

5. During the discussions on this point, one number of the Code Commission proposed that the amount could be fixed for each country by the Episcopal Conference in consultation with the Conference of Major Superiors The proposal was rejected for two reasons· 1 the same criteria cannot be applied to a diocese and a religious institute; 2. the Conference of Major superiors has no authority over the religious of the country (*Communicationes*, *ib*., p. 71).

responsibility of being in the state of perfection on the other, seem to have played any significant role in bringing about a quick end to such dissensions, so little in line with the message and the spirit of the "Good News" of Jesus Christ, of which both sides were the accredited preachers! *Sunt lacrimae rerum*....

In the past, religious at times tended to consider themselves as "the Pope's army", engaged in tasks assigned to them by the Vicar of Christ and consequently withdrawn from the control of the local Church authority. In extreme cases, some, or many of them, in their ardour and zeal for the propagation of the Kingdom of God, might even have all but yielded to the temptation of acting as if they were a parallel church within the local Church, pretty free from the dependence of the local bishop. Few perhaps, in these matters, displayed the humble charity, patience, meekness, prudence and wisdom, of which we have beautiful examples in the life of a Francis Xavier in Goa and Cochin, or a Joseph Vaz in Kanara, or an Anne-Marie Javouhey at Cluny and Mala (Guiana). In one speech after another, the more recent Popes, at least from Pius XII down to the present Holy Father, have made it quite clear that there is no conflict between the exemption of the religious and due submission to the local ecclesiastical authority. All things considered, it seems as though we have now entered into an age of greater mutual understanding, friendliness and collaboration. Vatican II has got us, religious and priests, secular or regular, used to think not so much in terms of our own selves or of our own little institutes or dioceses, as in terms of the great and challenging task we have all received from Christ and the Church — the spread of God's Kingdom on earth. This takes concrete shape in the local Church.

There is another factor that should stimulate both bishops and religious towards mutual esteem and openness and, may be, call us all to a needed "change of heart". It is the application of the doctrine of episcopal collegiality to the relationship between bishops and the religious. Here is an element to which not enough attention has perhaps been paid even during the postconciliar age. The document *Mutuae Relationes*, of the S.C. for Religious and Secular Institutes and the S.C. for Bishops, of 14 May 1978, and some recent speeches of Pope John Paul II have strongly stressed this aspect of the problem. So, too, does the new Code. The prerogative of interpreting the evangelical counsels, legislating for their practice and, by canonical approval, constituting the stable forms of living which arise from them, is held not only by the Roman Pontiff but also by the local bishops who are in hierarchical communion with him. Together with him they have to see to it, that "institutes grow and flourish according to

the spirit of their founders and to their sound traditions". Together again with the Roman Pontiff, the local Ordinaries have the responsibility of preserving and safeguarding the autonomy of the institutes (government, discipline, patrimony, etc.) (cf. cc. 586, 605).

In other words, it is not merely as the heads of their respective dioceses and the organizers and coordinators of the apostolic activity going on in their own particular churches that bishops come into direct relationship with the religious. A new element must also be taken into account. We know well that even prior to becoming the heads of particular churches bishops become, by their episcopal ordination, members of the episcopal college, and consequently "successors to the college of the apostles in teaching authority and pastoral role" (cf. LG 22; CD 4). They thereby share with the Pope in his solicitude, concern and responsibility towards the entire People of God spread throughout the world In this sense, the religious, bound by profession to the practice of the counsels and the search for perfection, even as such, and not just as Christian faithful, come under the special care of the local bishops, even in what concerns their internal life and discipline This is so because the bishops are, by virtue of their office, promoters and defenders of the sanctity to which the religious aspire and of the closer following of Christ which they publicly profess. Care and solicitude, however, do not mean undue intervention and juridical control. Over and above mere juridical regulations we are here in the realm of the Spirit who animates the entire Body of Christ, binding all the members together into one A few texts chosen here and there from official Church documents will serve to illustrate what is being said here.

In *Mutuae Relationes*, n 8, we read. " . Bishops, furthermore, as members of the Episcopal College, in harmony with the will of the Supreme Pontiff, are united in this namely, in wisely regulating the practice of the evangelical counsels (cf LG 45), in authentically approving Rules proposed to them (cf. LG 45) in such a way that a mission recognized as typically theirs is conferred on the Institutes, that a commitment to found new churches is fostered in them, and that specific duties and mandates are entrusted to them; in seeing to it, by their concern, that Institutes 'upheld by their supervisory and protective authority. may develop and flourish in accordance with the spirit of their founders' (LG 45), in determining the exemption of some institutes 'from the jurisdiction of local ordinaries for the sake of the general good' (LG 45) of the universal Church and to better 'ensure that everything is suitably and harmoniously arranged within them, and the perfection of the religious life is promoted' (CD 35)."

Again, n. 9 of the same document says: "Bishops, in union with the Roman Pontiff, receive from Christ the Head the duty (cf. LG 21) of discerning gifts and competencies, of coordinating multiple energies, and of guiding the entire People in living in the world as a sign and instrument of salvation. They, therefore, are also entrusted with the duty of caring for religious charisms, all the more so because the very indivisibility of their pastoral ministry makes them responsible for perfecting the entire flock. In this way, by fostering religious life and protecting it in conformity with its own definite characteristics, bishops fulfill a real pastoral duty". And n. 28 adds: "It is the duty of bishops as authentic teachers and guides of perfection for all the members of the diocese (cf. CD 12; 15; 35 § 2; LG 25; 45) to be guardians likewise of fidelity to the religious vocation in the spirit of each institute. In carrying out this pastoral obligation, bishops in open communion of doctrine and intent with the Supreme Pontiff and the offices of the Holy See, and with the other bishops and local Ordinaries, should strive to promote relations with superiors, to whom the religious are subject in the spirit of faith (cf PC 14) Bishops, along with their clergy, should be convinced advocates of the consecrated life, defenders of religious communities, promoters of vocations, firm guardians of the specific character of each religious family both in the spiritual and in the apostolic field."

This same idea has appeared again in the recent speeches of Pope John Paul II to bishops, religious and the laity. He connects it expressly, as we shall see, with the doctrine of episcopal collegiality. Thus, speaking to a group of the United States bishops on the occasion of their *ad limina* visit, he said, on September 19th 1983: "So much is religious life a part of the Church, so intimately does it touch her constitution and her holiness, that it must form an integral part of the pastoral solicitude of the Pope and the bishops, who have a unique responsibility for the entire life of the Church and are meant to be signs of her holiness. In speaking about religious life we are speaking about an ecclesial reality which concerns the bishops by reason of their very office". [6]

On April 3rd 1983 the Pope appointed a special commission, headed by Archbishop John R. Quinn, of S Francisco, to facilitate the pastoral work of the U S bishops regarding the institutes engaged in apostolic works in the country. Referring to that initiative of his, John Paul II said in the same speech referred to above the following: "I am deeply grateful to Our Lord Jesus Christ that this initiative has been so zealously undertaken by the Commission and by individual bishops,

6. *The Pope Speaks*, 28 (1983), n. 4, p. 345.

and that it is seen for what it is, an application — an extremely important application — of the principle of collegiality, a principle so forcefully enunciated by the Second Vatican Council. In proposing this initiative to your pastoral zeal, my first intention has been to affirm *collegial responsibility for the state of religious life*, which is intimately linked to the mystery of the Church and to the mystery of the episcopate...Your collegial collaboration...signifies an authentic functioning of collegiality, an authentic and vital relationship between the episcopate and the religious" (the italics are mine).

Coming down from these theological considerations to the practical level of law, we have to distinguish between the institutes of pontifical right and those of diocesan right, and examine the particular application of these principles in the present-day legislation of the Church.

a) Institutes of the Pontifical Right

The consent of the diocesan bishop is required for the valid establishment of any religious house in the area under his jurisdiction (c 609) Hence there is no room in the current legislation for small communities of religious scattered here and there in the midst of a town or city, without the knowledge of the local bishop.

The latter's consent is similarly required to change the apostolic destination of a house that has already been lawfully established (c. 612). In both cases, the consent must be given in writing It goes without saying that the interests of both the diocese and the institute must be safeguarded; not only must the religious life of the members be protected, but their other needs as well must be suitably provided for (c. 610)

More in concrete, the bishop's consent implies that he acknowledges thereby the right the religious have to lead a life that is in keeping with their charism, to pursue the works that are proper to their institute and, for clerical institutes, to have a church of their own where they can exercise the sacred ministry in accordance with the norms of the law (c. 611)

Where is that church to be located ? Not necessarily by the side of the religious house or in the same locality. The legitimate interests of the neighbouring churches or houses may have to be safeguarded — hence the prescription in c. 1215 that a separate written permission of the bishop has to be obtained regarding the particular *locality* where the church is to be built. Nor may the bishop give his consent without consulting the council of priests and the rectors of neighbouring churches (*ib.*). The good of souls may

thereby be better ensured and unhealthy and disedifying competitions and rivalries prevented.

We said that the bishop's permission entails automatically the right on the part of the religious to carry on the works proper to their institutes (e.g. for Franciscans or Dominicans to establish their Third Orders, or for Jesuits to start the Christian Life Communities). This is true. Nevertheless the bishop may in the act of giving his consent put certain conditions restricting those rights. If those conditions are accepted, the religious concerned are bound to abide by them (c. 611, 2°). It is gratifying to note that the new Code does away with the prescription of the 1917 Code (c. 497 § 1) which required an express permission from Rome for the establishment of any new religious house in the territories entrusted to the S.C. de Propaganda Fide. This applies to the diocesan as well as to the pontifical institutes. Once established a religious house cannot be suppressed without the bishop of the place being consulted (c. 616 § 1).

All religious are, by a general principle, subject to the local bishop and his directives in everything that concerns their apostolic activity and the public exercise of divine worship (c. 678 § 1). They should reverently acknowledge his authority together with that of their own superiors (c. 678 § 2). It is the local Ordinary who plans, directs, coordinates and controls the entire apostolic project in his diocese, irrespective of the class of people involved in its execution, the laity, the secular priests, or religious (cf. cc. 381, 394, 680). He may not, however, interfere in whatever concerns the internal life and discipline or the management of the houses of the religious. During the discussions of the Code Commission, one member had, indeed, proposed an addition to the draft text to the effect that the bishop should have the right to examine whether the religious in his diocese observe or not their constitutions. This seems to be necessary — he said — "both for the good of the Church and that of the institutes themselves". The proposal however did not pass, because it goes "against the legitimate autonomy of the institutes".[7]

The 1917 Code enjoined that the local bishop should every five years conduct a canonical visitation of all the houses of lay congregations of men and women in his diocese (therefore also of those of pontifical right) not only in matters concerning the church, sacristy, public oratory and the confessional, but also in those pertaining to internal discipline and observance (cc. 512 § 2, 3°; 618 § 2, 2°). This practice, though never abrogated, had in many places fallen out of

7. *Communicationes*, *l.c.*, p. 76.

use. The new Code makes no mention of it with regard to the institutes of pontifical right. What c. 683 does prescribe is that on the occasion of the pastoral visitation of parishes — therefore once every five years (cf. c. 396 § 1)— the bishop *may* officially visit the churches and oratories of *all* religious which are habitually open to the faithful in general, as well as their schools and other works of religion or charity entrusted to them.

Again, the previous Code laid it down that the session in which the supreme moderator of a congregation of women was to be elected had to be presided over by the bishop of the diocese in which the election was held (c. 506 § 4) He could do so personally or through a delegate. This prescription, too, has disappeared in the new Code. This is another practical application of the general principle stated in c 606, namely, that of equality before the law between men and women.

b) Institutes of Diocesan Right

What we have said in the previous section of this article regarding the dependence of religious on the local authority applies evidently also to diocesan institutes. Obviously, these are under closer and more direct care and supervision of the local bishop He has the duty of watching paternally over them and helping them in whatever way he can to grow and develop, in keeping with their spirit and charism, so as eventually to reach the degree of vitality and progress that will entitle them to seek the pontifical status [8]

8 The question is often asked Must diocesan institutes aim at becoming institutes of pontifical law ? The question has special relevance today for several reasons, one of them being the greater awareness among the Christian faithful of the unique value of the local Church, its peculiar theology, its autonomy within the context of the universal Church

In the past, approval from Rome proceeded by two stages a temporary approval through the "decree of praise" After the institute had given sufficient proof of its vitality and relevance over the years, a definitive approval of the institute and the constitutions followed In the present practice of the Church an institute is accorded the grade of pontifical right, not by a "decree of praise" as heretofore, but by a 'decree of pontifical recognition" which is definitive

Pontifical approval means the official recognition by the highest authority in the Church of a society with juridical personality in the universal Church and for the benefit of the universal Church It confers upon the institute a mark of stability that cannot easily be effaced for neither the institute itself nor any authority other than the Holy See can modify what has been approved by Rome The constitutions acquire thereby the force of pontifical laws Such institutes are, by that very fact, directly and immediately subject to the Roman Pontiff, both with respect to their internal structure and their more important decisions

An institute may have arisen in the Church as an answer to concrete local needs, as is often the case. Nevertheless, by its very dynamism it is open to the universal Church and its needs Papal approval, being the act of the universal Head and Pastor of the Church, brings out this essential aspect of such charism — hence its peculiar import and relevance In fact, ideally speaking, every religious institute should be canonically erected as such by the Pope. Experience however

It is the diocesan bishop, as we have seen, who establishes a religious institute by his formal decree (c. 579), approves the Constitutions and sanctions subsequent changes in it (cc. 587 § 2; 595 § 1), excepting those matters which the Holy See has previously approved or sanctioned, grants dispensations from the constitutions in particular cases (c. 595 § 2), presides over the election of the supreme moderator, if he is the bishop of the diocese where the institute has its "principal house" (c. 625 § 2)[9], has the right to be informed every year about the financial condition of each house (c. 637), conducts the canonical visitation of each of its houses[10], manifests his consent in writing to transactions mentioned in c. 683 § 3 (see above).

According to the new Code — and in contrast with the dispositions of its predecessor — the bishop of the principal house of a diocesan institute has greater responsibility in its regard than the other bishops in whose dioceses the same institute may also have its houses. Though his consent is no more required for the first foundation in another diocese, it is he who approves the constitutions, just as it is he who "deals with major affairs which exceed the power of the internal authority of the institute" (c. 595 § 1). In all these cases, however, he has to proceed in consultation with the other bishops in whose dioceses the institute has its houses.

c) Autonomous (sui juris) monasteries

In the canons of the new Code on religious there are references here and there to "autonomous" (*sui juris*) houses or monasteries. A brief word may be helpful for the right understanding of these canons.

Since the 16th century people have grown used to religious institutes whose members are grouped under distinct provinces or regions, each of which possesses various houses in which the religious reside and carry on their work. They are closely united among themselves

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has shown that in point of fact a certain amount of time and experimentation is needed for Rome to form its opinion about the advisability of granting or denying canonical approval to an institute. Hence the establishment of a sort of intermediate stage: the first official approval is given not by the Pope but by the local bishop. This is a temporary stage meant in due time to be superseded by a definitive approval.

9. By the 1917 Code the bishop of the diocese in which the election of a superior general of a congregation of sisters was held not only presided over the election but — in the case of a diocesan congregation — he had the power to confirm or annul the result of the election, according to the dictates of his conscience. The new Code gives him no such right.

10. This visit has as its object also matters concerning the internal life and discipline of the house. As Jean Beyer, S.J., remarks, it must not take place too often. If conducted by one who is not sufficiently acquainted with the institute's life and charism it often proves to be of little use and fruit (*Adnotationes in Codicem Renovatum. De Institutis Vitae Consecratae*, col 40).

under a common rule and have, besides the local superior, a higher superior (Major Superior) to whom they are all subject — General, and Provincial in most cases. This is the common and widespread pattern of religious in our days.

It was not so in the beginning. Not to speak of hermits or solitaries, or virgins consecrated to God who lived in their own homes, from the end of the 4th century we find monks or cenobites living together, apart from society, in various common monasteries juridically independent from one another, even though having the same spirit and following the same, or a similar, rule. They were self-subsistent and autonomous They had a superior of their own, commonly called Abbot (Father), who enjoyed the rights and prerogatives of what we now call a "Major Superior" This was the only type of religious life accepted by the Church for many centuries. The Canons Regular in the 11th century were the first to unite religious life with the exercise of the sacred ministry, under the rule of St Augustine. Then came the so-called Mendicant Orders in the 13th century — Franciscans, Dominicans and others, with a system of division and a way of life different from the older Orders and open to apostolic work in the midst of the Christian faithful The 16th century saw the rise of the Clercs Regular like the Theatines, the Jesuits and other institutes, fully devoted to an apostolic life

In the Code the word "monastery" means a house in which monks or nuns live their cenobitical life, that is their fraternal life in common, according to their ancient Rule, under an Abbot, or Abbess, Prior or Prioress An autonomous (*sui juris*) monastery is essentially a one-house structure harbouring monks, or canons regular, or nuns, who are attached in a stable manner to that house and live under a superior who has the rights and duties of a Major Superior according to the norms of the law (cf. c 613). Such monasteries can be suppressed only by the general chapter, unless the constitutions determine otherwise (c. 616) Autonomous monasteries of cloistered nuns, however, can be suppressed only by the Apostolic See (*ib*) They cannot be established without previous authorization from Rome (c. 609 § 2).

An autonomous monastery that has no other superior than its own local superior, if it is not associated with a religious institute whose superior has powers over it defined by the rule, remains under the care and vigilance of the diocesan bishop (c 615). The same bishop then presides *ex officio* over the election of the superior of such a monastery (c. 625 § 2) and conducts — himself personally or through a delegate — the visitation of the house, touching also its internal life and discipline (c. 628 § 2). He examines the account of the financial

status of the monastery which the superior has to present to him every year (c. 637). He also has to give his consent to transactions like the ones mentioned above which need authorization from the Holy See. If, on the contrary, a monastery of nuns is associated with an institute of men, it has its own rule and way of life determined in the constitution; their mutual rights and obligations must be properly spelt out in the same so that spiritual good might result from the association (c. 614).

We have reviewed the Church's current legislation touching the dependence of religious institutes on the ecclesiastical hierarchy. In order not to make the present article too long we leave for another time our comments on the large number of canons that refer the religious to their own law (*jus proprium*) or their own internal hierarchy.

These, of course, are no more than laws. Nevertheless, every law in the Church aims — or must aim — at being the expression of the promptings of the Spirit of Love who, even through laws and regulations, draws superiors and subjects together into one fraternal community of love, an anticipation on earth of the "fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1 Jo 1: 3) to which Christ's disciples are all called.

Document

Theological Education in India Today

STATEMENT OF THE INDIAN THEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

(*8th Annual Meeting, Pariyaram, Kerala, December* 28-31, 1984)

1. The Indian Theological Association had its 8th Annual Meeting at the Centre for Spiritual Realization at Pariyaram, Kerala, from 28-31 December, 1984. The theme of the meeting was "Theological Education in India Today". Over the years there has been a growing awareness that this is a crucial issue to which the ITA should address itself. The importance of this issue became even more clear, when we noticed that such significant events in the life of the nation as the developments in the Punjab leading to the armed intervention in the Golden Temple, the active participation of priests and religious in the fishermen's struggle in Kerala, the assassination of Prime Minister Mrs Indira Gandhi and the riots which erupted in several cities, the Bhopal gas tragedy, and the painful climax of the Kannada controversy in Bangalore, were not taken for theological reflection, except by a few groups What is God trying to convey to us through these happenings ? The fact that we have not tried to find out proves that our theologizing is only marginally a reflection on life-experience and Christian praxis

2. It is in this context that the ITA discussed and reflected on theological education and formation We are aware of the fact that we are not the first to become sensitized to the inadequacy, if not irrelevance, of the existing patterns for theological education and the importance and urgency of looking for new ways In response to the concern expressed at the All-India Seminar on the Church in India, a *Commissio Technica* was set up for the purpose of examining some important aspects of theological education, namely, the seminary formation. After broad-based consultation in 1969 it stated:

> Concretely and in particular, our seminary studies must prove themselves relevant and meaningful in the Indian context Professors are to strive assiduously to accommodate the entire doctrinal formation to the culture of the land, so that the students may be able to grasp and to express the message of Christ in the forms and thought patterns of their own (*Programme of Priestly Formation for India*, 1970, no 44).

This must be done in order "to train a fully integrated personality genuinely human and truly Christian" (no. 43). The Commission pleaded in this context for a deeper understanding of the religious and secular forces shaping India, the development of an Indian theology, an appropriation of the values truly incarnate in India, and a prayerful and contemplative study of the country's religious life. This, however,

did not lead to a satisfactory redesigning of theological education, its method and content.

Theological Education

3. Theology is reflection on experience in the context of faith. Faith is a response to God's revelation; it includes a commitment to His plan of liberation and transformation of the world and a search for the ultimate meaning of life. It is mediated for us through the various events of history culminating in the momentous event of Jesus Christ and articulated in terms of symbols, world-views, and liberating actions.

Theology, therefore, consists in critical reflection on our lived experience of reality in a given community with its own culture and traditions, its historical adventures, its struggles and hopes in the light of God's revelation taken in its totality.

Principles of Theologizing

4. The starting point of our theological reflection is the experience of the faith community. This experience is integral; it is constituted by the experience of the Judeo-Christian tradition and the holistic perception of the reality which is characteristic of our Indian heritage. However, the genuine religious experience goes beyond but is not independent of all religious articulations.

5. This experience has to be interpreted in the light of the living traditions, both Judeo-Christian and Indian, which in their turn are illumined and interpreted by fresh events and experiences. Since we are the inheritors of both these traditions, our theologizing task in India consists in a process of interaction between the life-situation of today and the religious heritage handed down to us. In this process our Christian experience may lead us well beyond our inherited traditions.

6. As a Christian community our theological reflection cannot be undertaken in isolation, but in communion with the experiences of other Christian communities. This brings in the element of *Magisterium*. By *Magisterium* we mean the articulations of the faith experience of the community at a given time and place. This certainly has its limitations. Hence its role in theological reflection is not to be understood merely in terms of formulating correct doctrines, but rather as a means for establishing a communion of faith among communities that may express the same faith in different ways.

7. Theologizing ought to be a deeply contemplative activity. For there can be no authentic theologizing except under the impulse of the indwelling Spirit who alone can impart the prophetic power to discern His actual workings in our world. The experience of the community has to be evaluated in the perspective of the Kingdom and the theological response will include, like that of Jesus himself, both denouncing and announcing — denouncing all the forces that are opposed to the

Kingdom and giving fresh hope to humanity. It is here that our theologizing becomes a powerful instrument for the transforming action of the Spirit.

8. This type of theological reflection is all inclusive: it embraces the whole life of the entire community, which forms the subject of theologizing. Therefore, all those who exercise the various ministries have to theologize necessarily in the context of the experiences, struggles and hopes of the entire community. This will declericalise our theology and christianize our theological reflection.

Factors to be Taken into Account

i) *Socio-Economic Situation*

9. A true theological education will enable the Church to collaborate with all the peoples in ushering in the Kingdom by means of liberation and transformation of the world Commitment, then, to social change is one of the essential requirements of the theological task It implies and calls for a clear, comprehensive appraisal of the existing situation

10 A close look at the Indian reality around us reveals that it is a land of great inequalities, the most striking one being that which exists between the rich and the poor Its causes lie deep down in the nature of the system itself, with its class-caste matrix, competitive profit-oriented capitalist productive system, etc. In such a situation the Christian has to be on the side of the poor because God has chosen them in order to bring about the salvation of all. Hence commitment to the downtrodden and oppressed becomes in effect commitment to God, and taking up their cause becomes the starting point of theological education

ii) *Indian Cultural and Religious Situation*

11 A Christian theologian in India today has to be a pilgrim in quest of truth, wherever it may be found Therefore, a sincere participation in the religious experience of people of other faiths becomes a *sine qua non* for our integral grasp and understanding of revelation itself. Hence, in practice, theological education in the context of plurality of religions turns out to be an inter-religious and inter-faith experience of the Ultimate which enlightens all peoples revealing Itself in various ways and diverse forms This will be more in the nature of an initiation into a way of life than an academic pursuit.

The universal presence of Christ's Spirit is the basis for an inter-religious approach to theological reflection and education. The Indian concept of *Sanātana dharma* may offer a potent means to this reflection and the consequent discovery of truth

iii) *Contemporary Scientific and Secular Context*

12. Though deeply rooted in the past, India is also experiencing the impact of science and technology, leading to a growing acceptance

of secularism. Scientific discoveries of the past hundred years have made their impact on cosmologies, anthropologies and sociologies. Theology cannot afford to ignore this scientific revolution because it deals objectively with the reality in its existential situation. It has therefore to enter into dialogue with the contemporary scientific, technological and secular world. This will provide the basic requirement for maintaining a more relevant world-view and the right orientation for interpreting the reality. This inter-disciplinary approach in theology will lead to meaningful interactions between the theologian and the scientist. Theological education seen in this perspective will be able to form men and women who can be authentic in their faith and relevant to their society.

Signs of Hope

13. In an attempt to translate these principles into action certain promising departures from the traditional theological programmes have been initiated in India Some of these attempts were made within the existing structures; others were more autonomous while still maintaining a link with traditional centres. Of these attempts, mention was made of regional theologates in Gujarat, Madras, Ranchi, and Patna which are connected with Vidyajyoti, and others like the M.P. Regional Seminary in Ashta, Bhopal.

14 In these experimental cases efforts have been made to use the local languages and to evolve a new methodology which would be based increasingly on the action-reflection-action cycle, thus demanding a real involvement in the life of the people This seemed to lead to a simplification of the life-style of the students and the staff These experiences thus become a significant source of fresh theological reflection. Also, because of the small numbers involved, the theological education was able to move away from the existing syllabus-centred model to become person-centred The group-theologising that also inevitably took place in these centres resulted in the findings being shared with a wider community through publications of various kinds. As a result the theology that has emerged from these groups seems to evidence a more authentic Indianness.

Areas of Concern

15. However, we believe that in furthering these creative endeavours and trying to work out a more purposeful theological education, we need seriously to reflect on the following areas:

16. We are deeply concerned with the fact that theological reflection and education in India does not evolve itself out of the very life struggle that characterises the Indian situation This situation would include the socio-economic-political reality, the varied religious heritages and practices, the phenomenon of Indian being both urban and rural, and the scientific secular world-view of modern India All these form part of the ongoing self-revelation of God to us that should be an essential part of our biblical hermeneutics and theological reflection. Further,

the fact that this theological reflection is not a communitarian one is also cause for deep concern.

17. Our understanding of the essential elements in the theological enterprise and the emphasis we lay on various factors can slant theological education in significant ways. Propositions and formulations and defence of doctrines can be so stressed as to reduce theological education to just an intellectual and academic exercise. Or emphasis could be laid wholly on the transcendental to the total neglect of the earth itself where the Kingdom comes. If the accent is on a bringing about uniformity of belief, freedom for theological explorations is curtailed. Further, the possibility of creating a relevant theological education will largely depend on how revelation, *magisterium*, tradition, spirituality, liturgy, etc., are understood.

18. Discontent among seminary students in many of our theological institutions should make us ponder seriously. The reasons for this could be many. It could be that some students experience a real dissatisfaction because of the failure of the theological education to address itself to their real questions, or the irrelevance of theology to their own previous experience of involvement in people's issues, or because of the 'banking system' fostered, or the prohibitions against free discussion of contemporary issues like the fishermen's struggle, women's ordination, etc. For other seminarians, perhaps, the discontent arises from the fact that theological education is not a goal in itself, but only a necessary step in the journey towards priesthood — a priesthood which, though a vocation, is visualised more as a career than as a calling from God through the community, to be servants. Other reasons for discontent include the ineffective pedagogical methods used, the lack of pastoral involvement of the staff, the lack of participation of the staff in the theological experiments of the students, and the disunity among the staff members themselves.

19. It is our strong feeling that the structure within which theological education is imparted controls its content and relevance. Where, for example, prime importance is given to stability, conformity and submission, the prophetic dimension in the theological ministry tends to be blocked, and an atmosphere of suspicion and fear is created within both the community and the institution of theological education. As a result people are afraid to follow their own personal convictions. Similarly, a structure that is greatly dependent on external sources for finance, theological content and even perhaps the training of personnel would hardly be able to throw its doors open to discuss the burning issues of present day India. Or again, when theological education is tied to the training of priests who are answerable only to the institution and not to the community, a deep dishonesty can be fostered that demands a sacrifice even of one's own personal apprehensions of truth. Finally, structures that do not foster the community's theologizing, but only that of a particular set of the elite, would give rise to an unreal theology.

20. The methodology of theological education that is not based on dialogue and not committed to the struggle to live a meaningful

Christian life in the multifaceted reality of the Indian situation must be critically reflected upon. The mass-production model does not enable the students to become the prime agents of theological education. Though teaching in the language of the people has recently begun in a few institutions, in other theologates, even where all the students speak the same local language, English continues to remain the medium of instruction. This not only hampers the impact and effectiveness of the teaching, but also alienates the staff and the students from their own roots and ethos.

Orientations

21. In the light of the above, we see theological education as the process by which the Church educates herself, builds herself up and equips herself to collaborate with the people in the common endeavour of liberation and creation of a new world. It involves the whole community at different levels of theologizing:

i) professional and technical — oriented towards exploring new avenues and vistas, aided by research;

ii) ministerial — focused on creative competent men and women for the services needed in the community;

iii) participative — for theologizing as reflection on faith is a task in which all Christians participate to the extent to which they are discerning members of the community.

All have the same aim, namely, to enable the whole community to reflect on its life and shape it towards the transformation of the world and prepare it for the coming of the Kingdom.

22. Theological education should be oriented towards meaningful Christian action and witness in order to build up a community by responding to its aspirations and hopes. We have to work towards an integral theological vision of the Indian reality, which is a mosaic of religions, cultures and social conditions There will be a double emphasis here: on Indian cultural and religious values as well as on the basic option in favour of the poor.

Models

23 At this juncture we would like to make a few suggestions towards evolving some possible models of theological education:

i) The big existing institutions, national and regional, could be revitalized by throwing them open to lay people, men and women; the teachers and students should be involved in the life and struggles of the people; the life-style of the staff and the students should be simple. It would be very helpful if some staff members and students stay for a definite period in centres with specific objectives like Indian spirituality, integrated pastoral action, dialogue with other religions and participation in people's movements. They should also participate in the work of these centres following the action-reflection-action method.

ii) The regional set up with small groups living close to the people, imbibing their culture and involved in their celebrations, sharing in their concerns and struggles, can evolve a more authentic theological reflection Investigation and discussion should be conducted under the guidance of competent animators participating in this venture.

iii) Theology should spring from the *anubhava* of both the staff and the students. After a basic training of four to five years during which period the student is initiated into the spiritual life, learns and acquaints himself with the language and culture of the people, reflects on problems of life, man, God, and world, he will start his own active ministry in which he is expected to be responsible and accountable. Theology would thus become an in-job training, a deepening of the vision of the faith experience. As the need arises the students should be given theology 'courses' for a prolonged period of time, but after that they should be sent back to the main stream of life to make a reality check on all that they have learnt The evaluation would be in terms of whether a student can look at reality from the faith perspective and react accordingly or not.

iv) Those who have shown some evidence of leadership in working with people are given one year intensive and comprehensive formation. This basic training should help them develop a Christian world vision, provide them with a basic understanding of the Scriptures, Jesus Christ, Church, Sacraments, Liturgy, etc, and introduce them to the know-how of working with people, community building, and so on Then they return to their own communities to exercise their leadership charism in working with the people They function autonomously, but are accountable to the community and to their formators. At regular intervals they come back to the training centre to share their experience and reflect critically on their ministry This method differs from the usual 'banking system' and follows a 'team-work' model From among these lay ministers some may be called to excercise the unifying (ordained) ministry

v) Theological education could take place in a prophetic style. There should be no pre-planned agenda Small groups in the course of their life and struggles with the people, will come up with radical questions In serving and animating the people they will discover progressively possible solutions and answers Self-criticism is an essential element of this method They must be ready with strategies to resist pressures from above seeking to impose ready-made theologies upon them

Plans of ITA

24 In order to facilitate the implementation of these insights and help realize these models, the following suggestions are made:

i) The ITA must plan and publish a series of monographs explaining and elaborating the principles and insights, methods and models that we have hinted at and outlined.

ii) The ITA must offer an in-service training and reorientation programme to its members.

Conclusions

25. We are happy to have been together and are grateful to God for the signs of hope we discovered in the year 1984 despite many tragic happenings. We pray for one another and for others — those who share our concerns and those who don't — and hope, wish and resolve to make the coming year new.

(*Continued from p* 208)

Asiatic Society of Lahore, Vol V, No 1, p 53 Apart from the absence of the title of the article, is the reference perhaps to the *Journal of the Punjab Historical Society*? I doubt whether any Asiatic Society ever existed in Lahore On p 108, the editor of Tieffentaler's works should be J Bernouilli, not Bernaculi I have my doubts about the existence of "many of Tieffentaler's manuscripts" (p 109) said to have been burnt at the time of the battle of Lucknow during the great revolt of 1857. Tieffentaler was no fool and he sent most of his own works to Europe so that they could escape a probable destruction The account given on pp 109-114 of Claude Martin and his educational foundations is quite accurate, but it has nothing to do with the growth of the Catholic Church in North India At best it is a nice story In fact, none of European adventurer who plagued North India in search of money and power had any influence on the growth of the Catholic Church—people like Madec, De Boyne, Duperron, and a host of others, to mention only those who were Catholic by origin May we still say today, as it is said on p. 166, that Martin Luther was "a destructive genius"? The text adds, moreover, that "the Catholic princes supported Luther against the Pope" This is a far-flung statement some did, those who became Prostestant, others did not But this already belongs to the Conclusion it runs into 31 pages, so that if one reads it one does not need to read the rest of the book A conclusion means summing up the main characteristics of the period studied, its achievements and defects, and the final results brought out by the investigations of the author

The question that comes to my mind when closing the book of Fr Daniel is whether it is a history or a chronicle. I would say it is rather a chronicle But as such it is very useful on account of the amount of facts it collects in a single volume In this respect it is a pity that it has no index of subjects, persons and places—indeed not even a table of contents

E R HAMBYE, S.J

Correspondence

"Culture and Dialogue"

Dear Editor,

This morning I received a copy of the January issue of VIDYAJYOTI with some offprints of my article on "Culture and Dialogue" I noticed that some 20 lines have been left out in p 6 I enclose the full text

Jesuit Curia,
Rome

M AMALADOSS, S.J.

The Editorial Secretary apologises to Fr Amaladoss and to the readers for the mistake in the transmission of the text From the 3rd para of p 6 of the January issue of VIDYAJYOTI *the text should read as follows*

Both these movements — inculturation and dialogue — must be seen "in the context of shared responsibility (of all men) for a common future, based on mutual respect, equal rights and equal obligations" It is in this situation that I would like to reflect with you on the implications of inculturation in the context of dialogue with other living faiths and ideologies I am already interpreting, I hope rightly, the terms 'culture' and 'dialogue' in the title proposed to me. Though inculturation and dialogue have been analysed and reflected upon, it is rarely that one sees them explored with reference to their mutual inter-relationship. My approach will be that of a theologian, but using tools of reflection borrowed from social sciences I shall first of all briefly share with you my experience as a Christian in India involved both in inculturation and in dialogue I shall then try to understand this experience through a process of reflection This will lead me to some theoretical statements and finally to some practical conclusions

Experience from Inculturation to Dialogue

Twenty five years ago I was busy studying Tamil language and culture so that I could translate and adapt the Gospel and Christian theology in linguistic and cultural categories which would be familiar to the hearers to whom I was going to proclaim Christian truth But the study of Indian, largely Hindu, religion and culture and contact with practicing Hindus led me to discover many good and inspiring things in their tradition that I wished to integrate into my own Christian tradition In the course of that effort I realised that what I was really looking for was an Indian Christian spirituality, theology, liturgy, etc, so that the Gospel incarnates itself in Indian culture, acquiring in this way a new cultural expression, becoming more catholic (universal) and at the same time purifying and fulfilling another culture Such an incarnation, however, proved impossible without a living dialogue with Hindus, reading their Scriptures, following their philosophico-theological reflection, interpreting their symbols and sharing their way of life and *sadhana* (spiritual pursuit) This tended to be an elite activity Contact with the people, the poor and a certain impact of the theology of liberation made me see

inculturation as an integral process of building up a new humanity (the Kingdom), in which proclamation, dialogue and liberation had their place and in which I am called to collaborate with all men and women of good will. (Though I am speaking in the first person, I represent a whole generation of Indians).

(Continued in p. 7, line 3).

Dear Editor,

VIDYAJYOTI, January 1985, page 7, para 3, says. "In my country at least Christianity still wears a colonial face, and when it is not actively opposed or looked at with suspicion, is marginalised as one more sub-caste".

This is a sweeping general statement and not true at all. Does Christianity in Kerala wear a colonial face? Are the Kerala Christians happy with that statement? Are the Tamil Christians agreeing with it? Are the Christians in the North East Provinces colonially stamped Christians? Are the Adivasis of Chotanagpur and Madhya Pradesh colonial Christians? I am very sure that all these groups and may be more groups have a strong indigenous Christianity I find the statement misleading. It would be good if the author specifies what he factually means

I have another question mark The author seems to group all religions together, and never even hints that the Christian religion is something very special and should not be put in the same category with other religions: it is the religion which the son of God Himself came to proclaim.

Prabhat Tara School
Dhurwa, Ranchi

George ZWIJSEN, S J

Book Reviews

Systematic Theology

The Analogical Imagination. Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism By David TRACY *London, SCM Press*, 1981. Pp xii-467 £ 12 50 (paperback)

Tracy's earlier *Blessed Rage for Order* dealt basically with the questions of fundamental theology in a world of pluralism *The Analogical Imagination* studies the nature and process of systematic theology in a pluralist culture and could well become a basic book for the understanding of what theology is, similar to, but on different lines from, Lonergan's *Theological Method* For Tracy theology is a "public" discipline, and its fora are not only the church, but also the world and the academy Unlike the discipline of religious studies theology makes a claim to both meaning and truth This truth has to be defended not only in fundamental theology, but also in systematic theology, the direct object of which is the beautiful aspect of revelation (compare the Aristotelian "poetics") But the beautiful comes to us as truth How can theology, rooted in the particularity of a faith decision claim a truth that is universal and to be proclaimed before the world and the academy? The key to solve the problem is the concept of the classic Classics are texts, events persons, etc, which disclose permanent possibilities of meaning and truth They bring about a disclosure of reality "which surprises, provokes, challenges, shocks and eventually transforms us, an experience that upsets conventional opinions and expands the sense of the possible a realised experience of that which is essential that which endures (108) Every tradition develops classics, every classic has "surplus meaning," and the systematic theologian is the interpreter of a religious classic the meaning of which he discloses from a particular situation

Although "systematic theology possesses a kind of normative status" (99), yet it must not become a "dogmatocracy". "Authoritarian, dogmatist, fundamentalist theologies are ideologies, not systematic theologies The difference between conservative Protestant evangelical theologies and fundamentalist theologies, the difference between the traditionalism of Archbishop Lefevbre's movement and the profound respect for tradition in Hans Urs von Balthasar, is a difference become a chasm. Indeed, fundamentalist and authoritarian theologies, properly considered, are not theologies at all Nor is this the case merely because such theologies will not take account of contemporary experience More basically, these theologies are finally not interpretations of tradition itself They are but simple repetitions The heart of any hermeneutical position is the recognition that all interpretation is a mediation of past and present, a translation carried on within the effective history of a tradition to retrieve its sometimes strange, sometimes familiar meanings But the traditionalist's use of tradition betrays the enriching, even liberating notion of tradition" (99-100)

But while rejecting the fundamentalist position, Tracy also castigates the uncritical, thoughtless and lazy pluralism that turns theology into a "soft" and wild discipline It is true that theology works primarily on the basis of the analogical imagination, yet analogy must include negation if it wants to avoid facile similarities and concordism It should not be a factory of "Cheap grace" "We can, of course, retreat into the heady experience of a relaxed pluralism of privacies We can retire to our reservations and forget the increasing consumerization of all the classic experiences and expressions of our and every culture Let philosophy retreat from its classical search for wisdom a technological age will not discourage it Let art and religion become purely private options, personal preferences, exotic consumer goods, let them renounce all authentic claims to truth and publicness the bureaucracies of neither West nor East will discourage that harmless diversion The corruptions of pluralist tolerance, like the corruptions of civil liberties, are real enough. Yet, these

corruptions pale beside the outright oppression inflicted by the self-righteous upon all those who will not share their univocal ideologies. For all those who cannot share either the easy answer of a relaxed pluralism or the hard answer of a brittle univocity, the reality of an analogical imagination becomes a live option in our day That option lives by its belief that the route to the future concreteness of the whole—a truly global humanity —lies through the concreteness of each particularity" (451).

The second part of the book studies the Christian classic, i e the event of Jesus Christ. For Tracy it is neither the Christ of faith nor the Jesus of history, but the Jesus remembered by the community that takes the theological weight of a religious classic, and its basic symbols are the cross, the resurrection and the incarnation This classic is experienced more powerfully as manifestation in the classical Catholic theology, as proclamation in the Barthian and Protestant theology, as praxis in liberation theology For Tracy "the theologies of liberation represent above all a classic event in search of a classic text" (397) But he seems to forget that earlier he had defined his classics as "those texts, events, images, persons, rituals and symbols which are assumed to disclose permanent possibilities of meaning and truth" (68) From inside the Latin American consciousness such a classic for liberation theology could well be the Sandinist revolution For that has been in modern times perhaps the first political disclosure of the liberating power of faith working through the poor This is why the recent events in Nicaragua and the lack of sympathy from the official church for the hopes concretised in that revolution are so tragic

Rich and thought-provoking as the book is, it makes for no easy reading Although it wants to reflect on theology in a culture of pluralism its horizons are overwhelmingly those of the Western academic thought Tracy is no Panikkar who operates simultaneously in various cultural fields The book, rich in many quotations, is prolix and involved, abounding in long clauses (on p 349 I counted 188 words in one single clause!) Many will feel discouraged by its massive academic display For those who will want the book, a must in every academic theological library, I recommend *not* to buy the paperback edition (which publishers love to send to book-reviewers)—it will fall to pieces in their hands before they are through with the book, which is, indeed, faultlessly printed.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, SJ

Church History

Indian Christians: Search for Identity and Struggle for Autonomy. By A. Mathias MUNDADAN C M I *Bangalore, Dharmaram Publications*, 1984. Pp IX-224 Rs 35

This handsome book comes from the pen of one of the leading historians of Christianity in India It comprises the revised text of the *Placid Lectures* he gave in 1981 at the Pontifical Institute of Oriental Studies

Much of the matter dealt with concerns the long, chequered, and not too happy history of the St Thomas Christians, especially since the 16th century Nobody can be proud of the vexations and the oppressions suffered by those Oriental Christians We still have to atone for them The earlier the better

One of the views of the author is well-known to me personally This is as follows An apostolic church should through its very origin be autonomous within the body of the Catholic Church I do not think that many would today question the need of autonomy for an Eastern Church, though some would hesitate before the far-reaching consequences it involves

Since the author is above all a specialist of his own Church, the treatment given to the other Christians in India remains necessarily less elaborate It does not mean that what he has to say about the Catholics of the Latin rite and about the Protestants is inferior in quality, or specifically in scholarship Yet one feels a certain lack of thoroughness, probably made unavoidable by the limitation of public lectures

Chapter IX, the last, presents a vision, often built on facts, of the "quest for an Indian Church" Everybody agrees that this is quite capital and needed Perhaps the fact that much of its present expressions, even the "indianized" ones, come from a dominant clerical leadership may, after all, be the chief obstacle to the implementation of such an ideal But here we are no more in history strictly-speaking, but in prophetic expectation

History can, however, to some extent at least, help such expectation to avoid pitfalls and to eschew lack of realism.

E. R. HAMBYE, S.J.

A Church in Struggle. By Dr A KANJIRATHINKAL C.M.I. *Bangalore, Dharmaram Publications*, 1984 Pp xviii-302 (-34). Price Rs 40.

There is no doubt that more often than once in the past, if not today, the relations between East and West within Christianity were painful. Sometimes they turned into conflict Occasionally they reached a point of rupture The author's intention here is to describe in some detail the developments that took place in the Syro-Malabar Church during the episcopate of the Carmelite vicar apostolic, Bernardine of St Teresa Baccinelli (1853-68).

The community had been frustrated from a long time in its quest for autonomy The dream of getting again attached to the patriarchate of the Church of the East, now in union with Rome, was alive for some years The first serious attempt in the 19th century under the Chaldaean bishop, Mar Roccos, ended in a rather quick failure Meanwhile the quest for an organized religious life started, until finally the father-founders of the present Carmelites of Mary Immaculate, formerly known as Third Order of the Discalced Carmelites, began a common life in the young monastery of Mannanam These were the most important of the many events of the time

They are all studied, discussed and analysed by the author The book is a doctoral dissertation for the Oriental Institute, Rome Since it was taken in the faculty of Oriental Canon Law, its approach is not merely historical It has also canonical aspects, which I am not competent to review here The last four of the nine chapters of the book are particularly devoted to the canonical and liturgical legislation brought out under the aegis of Mgr Bernardine The fourth chapter reviews the reorganisation of the seminary and seminary training in favour of the Syro-Malabar clerics

As could be expected the author does not mince his words when dealing with the increased latinization which his own Church suffered during this period The trouble in those days was that the Roman policy in inter-ritual matters though sufficiently clear on principle since Benedict XIV, was usually weak, to say the least, in practice Only since Pius XI did it became more logical and more ecumenical, i e pro-Oriental, as well

The book is unfortunately marred by too many printing mistakes. The last 34 pages, comprising a bibliography and an index, are not numbered.

E. R. HAMBYE, S.J.

The Growth and the Activities of the Catholic Church in North India [1757-1858]. A Historical Study. By Daniel Anthony D'SOUZA, O F M Cap. *Mangalore. St Anne's Friary*, 1982. Pp. (x-) 220 Rs 60

I am sorry to write only now the review of a book published in 1982, but it was sent to the Journal only in August 1984 and given to me a month or so ago. The purpose of the author, who obtained with this work the doctorate of philosophy at the Lucknow University, is to describe the chequered history of the various Catholic communities of Northern India since the Capuchin Fathers began working seriously there It covers therefore about a century, 1757-1858

Apart from the preliminaries, which I personally find rather irrelevant in a work of this kind and which include the earlier history of the so-called Mughal Mission from Akbar's time onwards, we are introduced to the heart of this history by a study of the Patna Prefecture and its outreach to the rest of Northern India By and large it is a history of missionaries, mostly, though not exclusively, Capuchins, nearly all of them Italians Since it concentrates on missionaries it has little to say concerning the Christian communities, their life, their social status, their relations with their priests When one reads on p 121 the letter of Bishop Borghi to the Sisters of Jesus and Mary one can hardly believe that such a pessimistic theology could still be held in the mid-nineteenth century Actually one has to wait for the years after World War I to find the missiologists writing in a totally different vein But even then they were often not listened to, and at times outrightly rejected !

A comparison between this book and that of Fr Fulgentius Vannini, *Hindustan-Tibet Mission* (cf VIDYAJYOTI 1982, p 102), shows that our author has used Vannini a good deal Actually Vannini's work was published in 1981, one year before the book under review. A few of the details of D'Souza's book need to be criticised Akbar's Christian wife (p 9) is a well-known legend exploded a long time ago by Hosten and Maclagan On p 41, note 14, we read, Felix Finck,

(*Continued on p. 203. See also p. 181*)

// Vidyajyoti
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In This Issue

While this issue goes to the press, in Ranchi the Chotanagpur Church is celebrating with gratitude the centenary of the arrival of the "Apostle of Chotanagpur", Fr Constant Lievens, to their land. The 30 000 Catholics that attended the centenary Mass on the 17th of March, had good reason to celebrate and be thankful: the vibrant Christianity springing from the labours of Lievens and his companions has brought a great enrichment to the Indian Church in the last century, and holds a promise of much influence in the future. In the hundred years since Lievens, the Chotanagpur Christianity has given ten bishops to our country, hundreds of priests and thousands of sisters and catechists dedicated to the service of the Church and of God's Kingdom. With the resources of its wise leadership, this Church can confidently look forward to its second century of growth. In this issue, a son of this Church, Fr Peter TETE S J, who recently gained a doctorate in Church History at the Gregorian University of Rome, uses unpublished sources in various archives to give us a realistic and well-documented summary of the work of Fr Lievens in Ranchi. As always we find also here many human factors entering into this venture We believe that, in spite of them and even through them, the Spirit of Christ has been and continues to be operative This history echoes the events of Pentecost we are celebrating these days.

The article of Fr Abraham PUTHUMANA is quite in harmony with the historical account of the work of Fr Lievens. It seeks to clarify the role of the Church, and of its priests and religious, in the promotion of justice as a dimension of God's Kingdom In a later issue this year our attention will be focused on the role of the laity in the total mission of the Church.

Perhaps for the first time in its history, VIDYAJYOTI publishes an article by an African priest and theologian It deals with the need of a theology which emerges from the specific culture of the place, and thus continues the theme of theological formation that was touched upon last month in the document of the Indian Theologicol Association. We may hope that the publication of this article may be the begining of a fruitful dialogue between the Indian and the African Church, to the enrichment of both. We think that the reflections of Fr EGBULEFU will help in the search of an Indian theology that does not overlook the popular dimension of our culture. Thus, it ties up with the theme of our first article and with the call of Fr Lancy Lobo in the January issue to pay greater attention to the so-called "little tradition".

One of the notes which we publish in this issue can also aid our reflection on the apostolate of the Church, which is the main centre of attention in this month.

Father Constant Lievens (1856-1893), Apostle of Chotanagpur

Peter TETE, S.J.

THE region of Chotanagpur is the Southern portion of the state of Bihar, in North India. Until a few years ago it comprised five districts: Ranchi, Hazaribagh, Dhanbad, Singhbhum and Palamau. The district of Ranchi (now divided into two more districts of Khunti and Gumla) was the largest of the five districts. According to the 1971 census the population of the scheduled tribes in Bihar was 4,932,771 It was among the Oraons, Mundas and Kharias that the Jesuits from the Belgian Province came to work as missionaries in 1869 (The Bengal Mission had been entrusted to them in 1859) Today the Archdiocese of Ranchi has an area of 26,600 square kilometres with a total population of 3,055,952 of whom 344,904 (11 25%) are Catholics The first Catholic missionary to arrive in Chotanagpur was Fr A Stockman, who started a mission station at Chaibasa in 1869. He transferred his converts to Burudi in the district of Lohardaga in 1874. The Mission was revived after the arrival of Father Constant Lievens in 1885.

Early Life

Constant Lievens was born on April 11, 1856, in the West Flemish town of Moorslede, in Belgium His parents were farmers. At 14, in October 1870, he entered the Minor Seminary of Roeselare with a desire to study for the priesthood. He was a very good student. In October 1876, he started his philosophy at Roeselare in order to become a diocesan priest. His attraction was towards the Jesuit Fathers. But unable to make a decision, he entered the Major Seminary of Bruges on September 30, 1877 The decision of Lievens to join the Jesuits was finally made when he met Father Callaert[1] who advised him to go to India as a missionary After the summer vacation, he went back to the Seminary, and with the permission of his family, he left it in order to join the Jesuit Fathers. He entered the Novitiate of Drongen on October 21, 1878. After two years of novitiate he was informed that

1. Father Callaert, a priest from Moorslede, was a missionary in the United States He met Lievens when he came to Belgium for a visit. Later he came back to Flanders (West) and became the pastor of Beythem, a part of Moorslede.

he was destined for the Mission of Bengal in India. Shortly after his appointment he went to Moorslede to bid farewell to his family as he told them that he had taken the vows and was leaving for India. The group which was to leave for India consisted of two priests, two scholastics and a brother. They travelled by ship via London, Gibraltar, Malta, Aden, Ceylon and finally to the port of Calcutta. The journey took about six weeks and on December 2, 1880 the group arrived at Calcutta. They were the guests of Mgr Paul Goethals, S.J., then the Vicar apostolic of Calcutta, until they received their appointments.

Lievens in India

The Bengal Mission where the Belgian Jesuits worked was eight times larger than Belgium. The Mission was divided into three big areas: Raghapur, Balasore (in Orissa) and Chotanagpur which was in the far West of the Calcutta Presidency. Lievens was sent to St Xavier's community and later he was assigned to do theology at St Joseph's in Asansol, where there were two theologians and six philosophers with three professors to teach them[2]. During his stay at St Joseph's in Asansol, Lievens began to learn three indigenous languages: Bengali, Hindi and Mundari. After two years of his study in Asansol, he was ordained priest in the Cathedral of Calcutta in January 1883. Father Lievens did not go back to Asansol immediately. He was appointed teacher at St Xavier's School and could meanwhile improve his English.

During Lievens's stay at St Xavier's Calcutta, Fr S Grosjean who was then secretary to Mgr Goethals, tried to win him over for the extension of the Mission. In August 1882, Father Grosjean was chosen as Mission Superior. He studied the methods of evangelization which were being used in India, and particularly in the Bengal Mission territory. He was struck when he realised the rapid growth of the Protestant Mission and so resolved to start a conversion movement if suitable opportunities were offered to him.

Towards the end of 1883 Lievens went back to Asansol to complete his theology and gave his final examination in March 1885. He was destined to the Chotanagpur Mission. From Asansol he went to Calcutta for further instructions. After a short stay in Calcutta he left for Chotanagpur via Giridih and arrived in Hazaribagh on March 15, 1885. After three days of rest, he went to Doronda near Ranchi where the Jesuit Fathers had a residence.

2. The St Joseph's Seminary in Asansol had been started in 1879 for the training of Jesuit scholastics. In 1889 it was transferred to Kurseong where it took the name of St Mary's College. In 1972 the then College and Faculty of Theology were transferred to Delhi under the name of Vidyajyoti, Institute of Religious Studies (*Note by the Editor*).

On March 19, 1885 (the feast of St Joseph) Lievens travelled on horse back to his first mission post at Jamgain, a village about 9 miles from Ranchi. The first thing he did after his arrival was to visit the Oraon families of the village. Then he began to learn the language and customs of the tribals. Meeting with little success (he had only 200 Catholics) at Jamgain, with the approval of Mgr Goethals, the Vicar Apostolic, he settled down at Torpa[3] so that he could co-operate with the missionaries of the *Quadrilateral*[4]. Fathers J. Mullender, L. Motet, J. Fierens and J. De Smet.

Torpa is a Munda village some 12 or 13 miles west of Sarwada and had a police station, a market place and a post office. Many of the neighbouring villages had many Lutherans and Anglicans, but there were no Catholics Lievens visited Father Mullender, who was in charge of the *Quadrilateral* and whose mission was then flourishing, to study his methods,[5] but was himself unsuccessful for months on end.

Lievens decided to take up the cause of the tribals, both great and small, against the *zamindars* (landlords) which Mullender had refused to do even at the request of the Mundas Lievens himself narrated this episode·

> I had stayed for months in Torpa without having made a single convert One day I asked the Sub-Inspector of Police who was very grateful to me for having given a medicine which cured his seriously ill wife, about this and he replied, "Sir, if you are ready to take up the cause of the tribals against the *zamindars* especially that of forced labour soon you will have many followers" I did what he advised and as he had predicted it came about [6]

In a short time more than 100,000 men applied to the Mission[7]. In Belgium this mass conversion was called the movement of grace,. Lievens understood it as the extension of the Catholic religion, whereas the tribals considered it as the liberation from the tyranny of the *zamindars*.

What the tribals needed was help in their poverty and support against the oppression of the *zamindars*. They had to fight against the landlords who demanded *bethbegari* (forced labour), the moneylenders who exacted high interests, and against the police who inflicted terrible

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3. Fidelis de SA, *Crisis in Chota Nagpur*, Bangalore, 1975, pp. 117-122

4 Sarwada, with its substation Dolda, and Bandgaon, with its substation Burudi, were four mission posts which became independent of Chaibasa and Buruma and were called the *Quadrilateral*

5 The method followed by Mullender was to deny no help to his neophytes in ordinary court cases. Many poor families joined the Catholic mission as a result. When the ownership of their fields was threatened, many farmers found protection in the missionaries by joining the mission.

6. J B. HOFFMANN to the Jesuit Superior General, *Memoir, Fascicle IV*, p. 1, in *Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu* (henceforward *ARSI*).

7. *Ibid*., p 2. The statistics are not very reliable.

injustices. The farmers had to work like slaves in order to escape cruel treatment from the *zamindars*. The moneylenders asked an interest of 75 per cent and the tribals in debt were forced to mortgage the best of their fields and then emigrate to the tea gardens of Assam for a period of five years. Very few of them returned to Chotanagpur.

Lievens took the side of the farmers against the *zamindars*. From the Sub-Inspector of Police who was his friend, he learned some practical points of the law and a few tricks of the landlords to evade the law. He went to Ranchi to examine the judgments pronounced by the court and to seek advice of the English officials. He determined to work within the limits of the law so as not to get into difficulties with the Government. He himself needed the protection of the officials in his help to the tribals.

Since the tribals were illiterate he had to explain to them the laws, their rights and their duties. Being still frightened they wanted to resort to force and violence in order to solve their grievances. They lacked money. Lievens hired the best honest lawyers to take up their court cases. At times he himself investigated the cases and informed the judge about them, so that the *zamindars* would not trick him with false witness.

A representative of the disappointed Lutherans came to Lievens and told him that they would join the Catholic Mission if he would take up their cause against the *zamindars* He had experienced failure in his attempts to initiate a conversion movement and so he realized the importance of this request and negotiated with the Lutherans. The missionaries of the *Quadrilateral* did not like to intefere in the tribals' disputes with the *zamindars*. Father Fierens did not dare to give any advice nor did he help in legal matters. Father Mullender, though he helped the tribals in ordinary court cases, was against any kind of involvement related to the rights and abuses of the *zamindars*, because this meant getting mixed up in politics.[8] But for Lievens this was *the* opportunity to reach the hearts of the disaffected Lutherans. And so he took up the defence of the Mundas and gained the magistrate to his point of view on the case by explaining to him in an interview the usual frauds of the *zamindars*[9].

This first success was followed by a couple of others which drew the attention of the people in and around Torpa. Soon people rushed to him seeking help against the *zamindars*' atrocities. Such was

8. In the beginning the Lutheran missionaries helped the tribals in their court cases against the *zamindars* They met with much success. But the English officers reminded them not to mix up religion with politics Hence as a rule the Jesuits were asked not to get involved in the rights and the abuses of the *zamindars*.

9. HOFFMANN to the Sup. General, *Fasc. IV*, p. 1a, in *ARSI*.

the demand for him that he could not go to all the villages he was called to. He sent out "emissaries to them with the promise that he would come personally as soon as possible and with the mandate to prepare the people for his arrival."[10] He advised the tribals on three main points:

> 1. Never to pay any rents without exacting a proper receipt. Since the cultivators themselves could neither read nor write they were told to pay rent only in the presence of an accredited mission servant able to read and write. 2. To absolutely refuse henceforward all *bethbegari* i e. forced labour. 3. To refuse payment of any rent which Fr Lievens considered as exorbitant.[11]

If the police took bribes and the landlords treated them badly he told the people to take them to court. He took a clear and definite stand. He asked the people to come to him telling them that he had come not only to work for their eternal happiness but also to make them happy in their earthly life. This was the message which was received everywhere with a sort of enthusiastic joy so that the movement spread like a wild fire. There followed success after success. By December 1887, many of the lawsuits were in favour of the Munda cultivators, and the landlords who were found guilty had been punished.

One of the reasons for the succes of Lievens was the rigorous application of the three points referred to above The law itself prescribed the issuing of proper receipts, but in practice the landlords flatly refused them to the tribals for the rent paid so that they (the landlords) could exact rents twice or three times The second point against the forced labour proposed by Lievens was right on principle. But during the time of Lievens the right to refuse forced labour was not yet explicitly recognized in Chotanagpur. Later some sort of forced labour was accepted because of "the carelessness and ignorance of the officers."[12] When the magistracy was won over by the landlords, Lievens was accused of inciting the tribals to open revolt against the law The third point of Lievens was a delicate one. He had advised a total refusal of payment of any rent which he considered exorbitant. In fact this demand of Lievens was illegal and incited the people to an open resistance against the law On the other hand it was equally true that there were a number of cases where the rents were really exorbitant, but they had been sanctioned by legal decisions. And these legal decisions "rested exclusively on the ignorance of the junior officers and on the reckless carelessness of some seniors and some of them were so plainly and cryingly unjust and inflicted such cruel hardships on the

10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*, p. 1b.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 1c.

poor cultivators, that they could not but rouse the strongest indignation in any right-minded man who from intercourse with the people at close observation saw these injustices in all their dire consequences."[13]

When Lievens went to a village people would present to him decisions given against them. He examined them and if it seemed to him that the rent was exorbitant he told them to offer a fair rent and if the zamindar refused the amount offered, it was deposited in the court with a remark that the *zamindars* refused to issue receipts for this rent offered. There followed innumerable lawsuits, in which Lievens fared well in the beginning. Though the third point of Lievens was impolitic and partially wrong yet "it cannot be denied that he rendered a great service to the horribly wronged aborigines by forcing these three great questions so vigorously to the notice of the Government that a final and somewhat fair solution became imperative and had to be taken up seriously."[14] On the other hand "the ever increasing boldness of the cultivators gradually degenerating into acts of very doubtful justice and some acts of violence eventually roused the Government into action"[15] which led to a strained relation between the officials and missionaries.

The Mundas came to Lievens, and in the beginning he helped them all. When the number of lawsuits grew he helped only those who were Christians. And when the help was offered to the tribals in trouble they were ready to become Christians. Lievens put conditions for help. He told them that if the whole village was ready to come over to Catholicism he would be willing to help them.[16] As a result sometimes the whole village became Catholic. The villagers regarded Lievens as their friend and protector. The news of successes of the court-cases went around the whole of Chotanagpur. By July 31, 1886, Lievens had 1,150 Christians in fifty villages under the Torpa mission post. Father H. Gengler came to help Lievens on October 2, 1886, but on account of his weak health he had to leave the place on December 18, 1886. Seeing the unexpected success of Lievens, missionaries from the *Quadrilateral* were ready to co-operate in the extension of the Mission. Even Father F. De Cock who had been against the methods of Lievens began to appreciate his missionary success. As is well-known, of all his colleagues Lievens had the greatest support from the Superior Regular of the Mission, Father Grosjean.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 1d.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 1e.
15. *Ibid.*
16. The reason why Lievens did not accept to act when only half the village was ready to become Catholic was that the peace and unity of the tribals were at stake. If only part of the village accepted the faith, the remaining part would become allies of the *zamindars*.

In early 1887 Lievens had a new assistant, Father Jan De Smet, from Sarwada mission station. They divided the work. Lievens stayed at home to listen to the difficulties of the tribals and to give them advice in their court case. Father De Smet went to different villages to teach on matters of religion and baptize those who were too old to go to the mission centre at Torpa Exhausted by overwork, De Smet had to leave Torpa after four months.

The Torpa mission had fifty catechists and teachers. In a letter to the Provincial in Belgium, Lievens wrote:

> We have many converts now and Torpa is going to be a good mission, but without much organization. A lot of work is going on in the rain and with terrible fatigue. We are dividing our mission into circles, already 10 circles have been settled and we are busy building chapels and a house attached to each chapel The trouble is lack of money to finish this work Each chapel costs us at least 200 rupees and we need 10 for the moment This cannot be postponed The Christians without a chapel are like herds without a shed The parish will disintegrate, lose its activity and the people will return to paganism They have to be gathered for daily prayers. What would happen in Europe if they would have neither chapels nor churches at their disposal ?[17]

By the end of July 1887, Lievens had 10,000 Christians under his care After the departure of Father De Smet, Father L. Cazet and Scholastic H. Seitz were sent to help him Both of them did marvellous work But Lievens was in need of a suitable man to organize the new converts, to baptize the children and prevent the adults from defection.[18] He wrote·

> My Christians are mainly Christians in name and desire, neither organized nor instructed. A strong hand is needed to organize these things in a permanent way May God give such a strong man ! And not only one, but if possible more It is quite superfluous to make Christians when there is nobody to care for them [19]

The Superior Regular of the Mission also wrote to Father Provincial in Belgium to send more missionaries for the mission at Torpa. He tried to explain to him the need of six more priests If there would be no reinforcement of the missionaries not only would Lievens collapse by overwork, but the whole work done so far would be ruined. Mgr Goethals, too, wrote to the Provincial The answer was a positive one. The first batch of reinforcements left Belgium on September 15, 1887, and the second in October of the same year and the third was expected to leave soon. In the meantime, the collaborator of Lievens, Father

17. A. Marlier, *Een Jesuiet-Missionaries*, *Pater Constant Lievens*, Louvain, 1929, pp. 207-208.

18. Lievens had hoped to get Father J Schäfer who was then doing Tertianship in Ranchi

19 Lievens to Goethals, from Torpa, August 30, 1887, in the *Archivum Provinciae Belgicae Septentrionalis* (henceforward *APBS*).

Cans felt ill and was brought to Ranchi where he died on September 25, 1887.

Following the mass conversion there was a bitter reaction from the landlords, but the Government officials in Chotanagpur did not interfere with the work of the missionaries as long as peace was preserved. Lievens was aware of the fact that the Government was opposed to the rebellious activities of the Mundas who wanted to get back their fields and to establish an independent Munda "raj" free from the alien *zamindars*. Therefore Lievens warned his followers and kept aloof from this type of political agitation of the Mundas. In spite of this prudence Mr Stevens, the Commissioner of Chotanagpur, accused Lievens of supporting the tribal rebels who aimed at the restoration of their "raj".

December 1887 was a year of blessing when fifty villages came to the mission. But all the hopes of Lievens had evaporated when out of four newly arrived priests, Fathers E. Van Severen, L. Haghenbeek, C Huyghe and A. De la Croix, only one priest was given to the Torpa mission. He was Father Van Severen. Lievens was disappointed with the decision. He wrote to the Provincial in Belgium:

> Today we learnt that one Father is coming to help us, Father Van Severen, he only, no one else ! . . . . I wished they had sent none from Europe. Why is this ? I am all alone here, caring for 25,000 souls. I am exhausted, sick and perhaps I have to look after a missionary who will be often in bed.[20]

Lievens Director of the Mission

In September 1888, Father Lievens was appointed the Director of the Mission and so he was stationed at Ranchi. He remained in that office until mid-November 1889. Ranchi being a central place, it was easy for him to help those who had court cases. He continued his instruction of the catechists. He appealed to Father General for more missionaries and money for the Mission. He wrote to him of the growth of the Mission:

> We are 6 missionary priests only, distributed over an area of hundreds of miles in length and breadth, and have no less than 50,000 souls and about a thousand villages. Half of our people have never seen a priest, are not baptised, have scarcely got any instruction and are with our catechists. . and unless taken care of will infallibly return to paganism.[21]

On August 20, 1889, Lievens started his mass conversion movement in Barway among the Oraons. On September 1, 1889, he had administered 205 baptisms. His colleagues stayed on and visited eighty

20. LIEVENS to the Provincial, from Torpa, no date, in *APBS*.
21. LIEVENS to the Sup. General, from Ranchi, January 7, 1889, in *APBS*.

seven villages. The estimated number of converts including the catechumens was 65,000, of whom 40,000 were baptized.[22] It was impossible for so few priests to look after the spiritual care of so many converts. The religious instruction was in great part left in the hands of the catechists, but trained catechists were wanting. The Superior Regular of the Mission, Father Grosjean, had heard of the anxiety of the Fathers concerning the shortage of catechists and the non-existence of schools. He came to Ranchi to see what could be done about new mission stations in Barway. Appeals for more help in the form of new missionaries were sent to the Superior General in Rome[23].

On April 20, 1891, Grosjean and Lievens visited the Barway Mission; the former spent only eight days in that area. The latter remained in the region for some time and when he returned to Ranchi on June 5, he was a broken man. The constant riding on the horse in the hottest part of the summer had ruined the already weak health of Lievens He could work no more for the people of Barway. He had to leave for Kurseong, in Darjeeling, to take a complete rest.

While Father Lievens was in Darjeeling Father Theophil Bodson replaced him He had just completed two years in India. One day one of the *chaprasis* from Barway approached Father Bodson for a loan of twenty rupees for a fine he had been sentenced to pay during a lawsuit in Ranchi. The Father refused the amount to him. The man went and received help from the Lutheran missionaries. He invited them to his village The Lutherans arrived in Barway. Their arrival drew the attention of Fathers L. Cardon and P. Dehon. Father Bodson in Ranchi had not realized the consequence of his hasty action. Word had gone round the area that the missionaries had denied a much needed help to the *chaprasi*. The Jesuits lost the confidence of the people. The news reached Lievens in Darjeeling. Afraid of a great defection into Lutheranism, Lievens left Darjeeling and was back in Ranchi on October 8, 1891 In fact, the Lutherans had started building a school at Kansir. About this time Father Grosjean was in Ranchi and he had decided to open mission stations and boarding schools in

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22. F de SA, *Crisis in Chota Nagpur*, p 154. It is very difficult to establish the real number of converts at that time, because there was no proper register for the baptised. Each missionary gave his estimate of the number of Christians in his area.

23. "Juvat nunc me posse dicere tria millia quingentos conversiones ethnicorum locum habuisse; ita ut numerus christianorum in nostra regione jam sit 55,000. Mittat Deus operarios in messem suam ! Missione Barwayensis cujus statio in Katkahi designata 20,000 christianos, et duo tantum Missionarii tantae multitudinis curam debent, atque addendum est unum ex duobus jam non esse satis formae valetudinis." J. BRAET to the Sup. General, from Ranchi, November 14, 1900, in *ARSI*.

Barway.[24] But the decision did not materialize because Archbishop Goethals was against mission extension in Barway.[25]

Meanwhile Fr Louis Bodson had been appointed the Superior, Regular of the Mission and Fr Louis Haghenbeck the Superior of Ranchi House, both of whom were against the methods used by Lievens and Grosjean.[26] In the beginning of 1892, it was said that the converts were abandoning Christianity because there were no mission stations and priests to look after their spiritual needs. In spite of objections from the Superiors, Lievens went to Barway "to keep and strengthen the faith."[27] It was his last visit to the Barway Mission. Father Haghenbeek told Father Bodson, who had not yet taken up the office of the Superior Regular of the Mission, to recall Lievens. Lievens obeyed and returned to Ranchi. But on his return from Barway he found that his health was wrecked. He was suffering from tuberculosis.

The last days

On August 28, 1892, Lievens left Chotanagpur for Belgium with a hope of getting his health back. He arrived in Naples on September 26. Because of his weak health the doctors from Italy sent him to Belgium, via Rome. He reached the Probation House in Drongen on October 28, 1892, and he was taken to the infirmary. While recuperating he spent most of his time in reading and prayer.

Father Lievens was glad to be back in Flanders, though his heart was in India. He wondered if he would go back to Chotanagpur at all. He was accused of not taking care of his health. In one of his letters of May 24, 1893, he wrote: "I do not know if God will send me back to India. His holy will be done. I worked in spite of my health. I acknowledge my mistakes, but I have no regrets." Day by day his condition was deteriorating. On August 15, he said the Mass for the last time.

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24. In the beginning of the mission in Barway the Jesuits had found it impossible to establish missions in the area, and so the converts had to be taken care of from Ranchi. The rest of the work was done by catechists and *chaprasis*.

25. Archbishop P Goethals was against a quick expansion of the Mission. Besides, he had spent all his resources and could not supply more money as needed for Mission expansion. Moreover, the unhappy incidents of the shooting of a *zamindar* by Fr A. Cus, and Fr E. Canoy's inflicting injuries on the head and arm of a Lutheran with a knotted stick had caused the Archbishop shame in public eyes and in Government circles. From then on he kept away from the Chotanagpur affairs as far as possible. HOFFMANN to the Sup. General, *Fasc. IV*, pp. 6-7 in *ARSI*.

26. Fathers Bodson and Haghenbeek were opposed to any further extension of the Mission. They decided to concentrate on what had been achieved by opening new mission stations and schools. They were against giving help to the tribals in legal matters.

27. HOFFMANN to the Sup. General, *Fasc. IV*, p. 11, in *ARSI*.

Lievens was taken to Louvain. On November 5, 1893, the doctor reported that Father Lievens was getting worse. In fact, there was now no hope of his getting better again. The following day he received the sacrament of the sick. On November 7, he turned very pale. The doctor knew that the end had come. The priest who helped him in his last hours gave him absolution and blessed him. He died on that day, November 7, 1893, at the age of 37. Two days later he was buried in the Jesuit cemetery at Heverlee, away from the tribals of Chotanagpur whom he loved so much.

Conclusion

Father Lievens baptized thousands. He is rightly called the apostle of Chotanagpur. But many would question his missionary methods. He has been accused of baptizing the tribals much too quickly. In fact, the question of quick baptism took a serious turn and became a very controversial issue between the Archbishop Goethals and Father Grosjean, the Superior of the Mission. The matter was referred to the Apostolic Delegate Mgr L. Zaleski. He wrote to the Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Faith, then Cardinal M. Ledochowski, informing him that the Jesuit Fathers of the Belgian Province, men of great zeal for the propagation of the faith, made mass conversions and baptized without giving sufficient instructions. According to him this resulted in the defection of great numbers and in the remainder being for the most part Christians only in name. To this accusation of the Archbishop, Father Grosjean replied that none of the tribals were baptized without having learnt at least something of the faith, the most indispensible elements. It was the Archbishop who failed to support the Mission under the pretext that the Mission in Barway had been opened without his permission and that the priests baptized without giving sufficient instruction. According to Grosjean, Mgr Goethals refused to provide missionaries and the money needed for the erection of the new mission stations. And thus the neophytes, left to themselves and receiving no spiritual care, forgot whatever they had learnt and lost their faith.[28]

Father Lievens was interested in the social problems of the tribals in Chotanagpur. During his missionary work he faced very great problems. There were landlords who dispossessed the tribals of their land, extracted forced labour from them, and took unreasonably high rent. And when the tribals could not comply with the demands of the landlords they were dragged to the court. Lievens took

28. Mgr L. ZALESKI to Card. M. Ledochowski, from Kandy, June 8th, 1892, *Anno* 1895, *Rubrica* 12-13, NS Vol 56, in the *Archives of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith*, Rome.

the side of the farmers against the *zamindars*, *jagirdars* (lease holders) and moneylenders.

Lievens was fully convinced that giving help to the poor and oppressed tribals was profoundly Christian and in keeping with the teaching of the Church. As we have said above, he told the tribals that he had come to work not only for their eternal happiness but also to make them happy in their earthly life. Thus his social concern for the tribals was a witness of the fact that the Church took a real interest in the welfare of the people and her priests went among them and showed sympathy for their misery and sufferings.

(*Continued from p.* 252)

The author writes with the American Society in mind which limits the usefulness of the book, yet this scene does not enter too strongly. For prayer, the preparation of homilies and instructions the book provides rich material The book would have been richer if there was more dependence on the Word of God and its contemporary situational interpretation

P. M. MEAGHER, S J

Biography

The Saint on a Mission. The Life of St Francis Xavier. By Albert Jou, S J. *Anand, Gujarat Sahitya Prakash* 1984. Pp. x-216. Rs. 10.

This book that covers the life of St Francis Xavier in 25 short chapters has a simple vocabulary and is suited for high school students. There are a number of anecdotes which convey the character of Francis. But three important qualities are specially seen throughout the book. They are a life of commitment, Francis' humility, and his concern for the good of those whom he came in contact with. One can see in chapter 8 that although he was not able to speak very good Italian, he went ahead and preached to the people, who were touched more by his life than by his eloquence. In most of the places he went to, Francis worked with the poor and sick in hospitals. He used his spare time to beg for them with a bag on his shoulder, in a spirit of humility and love for the poor. An important method he used to spread the faith was catechising the children who would later influence the adults at home. Children were also his messengers to teach the sick to make acts of faith and to pray over them In this way people were healed in soul and body Francis' dedication to his mission is seen through the many letters he wrote to Ignatius and other friends he came in contact with during his journeys.

There are a few instances of "miracles" which some adults may find hard to believe I also noticed that some of the kings and rulers wished to become Christians only for some material gain or benefits in trading with the Portuguese. Later they went back to their former religious practices.

In general the narration is fast moving since the author covers a long period of time in a few pages. It will appeal to youngsters who wish to know something about a favourite hero and his journeys. The book is illustrated and very reasonably priced. As the author says in his epilogue, "you need to make your own evaluation of the book and draw your own conclusions"

Conrad FONSECA, S.J.

Priests and Religious at the Service of the Kingdom

Abraham Puthumana, S.J.

It is up to Christian communities to analyse with objectivity the situation which is proper to their own country, to shed on it the light of the Gospel's unalterable words and to draw principles of reflection, norms of judgment, and directives for action from the social teaching of the Church. (*Octog Adveniens*, no. 4)

Introduction

IN this short paper I am given the responsibility to share some reflections on "Priests and Religious at the Service of the Kingdom". The topic is very broad, and it is imposible to do justice to it in the time and competence now at my disposal. Therefore, I plan to do the following I will comment on two aspects of the Kingdom, using the Gospel paradigms of the Jubilee and the Banquet. Then I hope to give a very cursory overview of the erosion of this concept of freedom and liberation in the Church through the centuries, and point out some of the causes for such erosion of values. Along with this I also want to draw some lessons from the experience of the saints as to the ways in which committed men and women try to respond to deteriorating situations through vision and persevering action. I hope to conclude this section with a passing reference to the rediscovery of respect for human rights through the happenings in the secular world. This overview of history does impart some lessons for us, which I hope to mention briefly.

In the next part some of the outstanding break-throughs in the recent teaching of the magisterium will be referred to. With the above as a backdrop the question is put: What is the role of priests and religious in the service of the Kingdom ? My answer to this question is going to be partial and incomplete. My only hope is that this presentation may help us to search jointly for fuller answers and for a meaningful and fruitful involvement in the lives of the people so that the Kingdom that Jesus proclaimed may be realized in our midst.

Two Gospel Paradigms

In the Gospel we have many paradigms of the Kingdom. The inaugural address of Jesus recorded by Luke (4:16ff) gives us a glimpse of the paradigm of the Jubilee that Jesus used. Some of the values that stand out in the concept of the Jubilee in the Bible are the following: (1) The Jubilee is a year of release, a year of liberation. Liberating human actions are the adequate response to the jubilary and liberating grace of the Lord. (2) It demands a return of the people to their land, because the periodic recovery of the land is a way to correct the injustice of the frequent impoverishment of small farmers who had to sell their lands, and even families, to pay taxes and also to cover debts caused by illness, natural calamities, etc. To be deprived of land, then, was to be deprived of freedom and life itself. (3) The Jubilee is a periodic legal revolution desired by God, established by law and proclaimed by the prophets. It helps to level inequalities that come in society as a result of human greed and selfishness. It calls for constant conversion. It is interesting to note here that jubilary legislation is found in all the books of the Mosaic Law of the O.T. Cancellation of debts and setting the captives at liberty are the basic demands of this legislation.

If we look at the proclamation of Jesus in the above background, we will be led to admit that a spiritualizing interpretation of the Lucan Jubilee proclamation would totally miss Jesus' intent. He rather took the person in his or her totality, body and soul, the individual and the social existence. Jesus sees his mission as liberation in the fullest sense of the word found in biblical usage — historical and eternal, material and spiritual. It includes a liberation from the concrete forms of oppression: economic (return to the land, cancellation of debts) and social (emancipation of slaves), and liberation from the final root of oppression, the inner bondage of sin, through a double forgiveness from God and to the neighbour.

It is left to us to see what are the concrete applications of the Jubilee for our times, by referring it to the concrete forms of oppression that people experience today. It surely means working for a collective repentance that will put everything and everyone in line with the Kingdom Jesus announced. This is the only way we can really demonstrate our deep understanding of and adherence to the jubilary proclamation of Jesus in his inaugural address.

Another biblical paradigm to which I would like to draw attention is the Banquet. On many occasions Jesus compared the Kingship of God to a Banquet. It is a common experience that in a banquet we go beyond quantitative equality and egalitarianism to something

more valuable. In a banquet the guests do not compare what others get or have. There is no fear of anyone being served less because someone has more. The justice of the Kindgom, which calls for conversion of heart, will lead us to an eschatological situation where each one's need will be met without depriving others, because of the acceptance of the call to repentance and, consequently, the restoration of all things as God planned before man/woman upset the balance by sin.

I feel that our struggle for the liberation of men and women has to keep these paradigms in view, if we are to be true to the vision and message of Jesus.

Loss of Vision in the Course of History

If the above are some of the basic characteristics of the Kingdom, then the question arises as to how we lost sight of these important aspects of Jesus' proclamation. History gives us some possible clues. At the risk of being overly brief, I would like to quote a passage from Charles Wackenheim, "The theological meaning of the Rights of Man" in *Concilium*, 124 (1979) pp. 51ff. Speaking of theory and practice of the Church with regard to Human Rights, in the context of the new, orientation given by Vatican II, he says the following:

> In reality the problems of Vatican II have their roots in a deviation of Christian theology dating from the second half of the fourth century At a time when authors such as Tertullian, Lactantius and Hilary of Poitiers were echoing the Gospel character of freedom of conscience, from Firmicus Maternus on there were apologists of developing "Christendom", and of violence to enforce doctrinal orthodoxy Confusing offences of opinion and crimes against the common law, Augustine himself justifies recourse to the arm of the state in his struggle against the Donatists Famous bishops of the period, such as Martin of Tours and Ambrose of Milan, refused to sanction such methods, but Pope Leo I (440-461) was to approve the execution in 385 of the heretic Priscillian. The mediaeval Inquisition was present in bud in this deadly association of Church and State From then on, any attack on the unity of the faith would be seen as an attack on the social and political order
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> The third and fourth Lateran Councils (1179 and 1215) heap privileges on those who fight heresy sword in hand In calling for a Crusade against the Albigenses, Innocent III compared religious dissent to high treason. The legal basis of the Inquisition was laid by Pope Gregory IX and the Emperor Frederick II. By the Bull *Ad exstirpanda* (1252), Innocent IV advocated torture in the interrogation of suspects. The thirteenth century theologians fall in line with the secular authorities in justifying this procedure. In Thomas Aquinas' writings, appealing to Augustine on this point, remarks such as this can be read: "(Heretics and apostolates) must be forced, even physically (*sunt etiam corporaliter compellendi*), to honour their promises and to maintain what they accepted once and for all" (Summa Theologica 2a, 2ae, q. 10, a. 8; cf. q. 11, a. 4).

This brief summary leads us to formulate the following hypothesis. The message of Jesus and of the primitive Church helped to give men and women a powerful awareness of their true dignity. During the first three centuries of the Christian era, the Church ceaselessly asserted the rights of persons and this in the face of the claims of the imperial power. After 313, the need for the cohesion and survival of human institutions took precedence over the proclamation of the truth that makes people free (Jn 8:32). Once she gained the social and cultural leadership of the West, the Roman Church espoused as a matter of course the ideology of the established order. From this point of view the claim for individual rights necessarily appeared subversive. Barely a century before Vatican II, Pius IX could condemn out of hand a proposition like this: "Any man is free to embrace and profess the religion which by the light of reason he judges to be true". (*Syllabus*, 1864, no. 15; Neuner-Dupuis. 1013/15).

Prophetic Witness to Gospel Values

While the above cursory view of history gives us a brief track record of the Church with regard to human rights, we must also recall that the prophetic element in the Church continued to be alive in spite of the restrictions imposed on the members. We have stalwarts like Ambrose and John Chrysostom taking on the might of the empire in defence of the rights of the people. Many of the founders of religious orders and congregations gave charismatic expression to the basic message of the Gospel of freedom and fellowship. Francis of Assisi brings back the value of the human person — body and soul — to the centre of the Christian view of life. The *Devotio Moderna* group in the Netherlands challenged over-centralisation of life and worship. One could call *The Imitation of Christ* a subversive document, if projected against the setting of the late Middle Ages. In many of its passages it asserts the centrality of the person. Ignatius of Loyola tried to free men from craving after wealth and power by demanding that his companions avoid accepting ecclesiastical dignities. He demanded that they should serve the most neglected in society. Vincent de Paul freed women from the stranglehold of cloister norms by calling his group a pious association of women at the service of the poor. St Julie, the foundress of the Sisters of Notre Dame of Namur, and in our own day Anne Dengels, the foundress of Medical Mission Sisters, are examples of a commitment to the Church and the ability of people to read the signs of the times through the eyes of the gospel. Archbishop Romero is a martyr of liberation, who went to his reward five years ago.

If we look at the recent theological landscape we see a similar picture. About thirty years ago Karl Rahner was forbidden to write any more about the idea of concelebration. Yves Congar, Henri de Lubac and Marie Dominique Chenu were all dismissed from their posts as teachers of theology. Yet these "dissenters" prepared the way for Vatican II and had a strong influence in its work, which has set the Church on a completely fresh course greatly to our liking (Cf W. Bühlmann, *Courage, Church* !, p. 38).

Thus we see that saints and sages, theologians and seers have contributed to the shaping of the Christian understanding of the gospel relevant to the changing times throughout the course of the Church's history.

What I want to point out in conclusion is the following: (1) Whenever there was too close a tie-up between political power and religious authority, there was a departure from the basic values of the Kingdom. (2) In these settings, the official Church lost its prophetic freedom to correct the misuse of authority and restore the rights and dignity to people, and to release the creative energy of the people for the building up of the Kingdom. (3) At the same time, one notices that the Spirit of God was never chained. Through their prophetic intervention in the life of the Church, many men and women filled with the gifts of the Spirit helped to steer the barque of Peter. They sensed the passing away of ages and traditions. They woke up to the challenges for the reinterpretation of the Gospel, for meaningfully shaping the life of the people according to the mind of Jesus, and for meeting the changed demands of life. (4) After initial resistance — some times for prolonged periods of time — the authorities in the Church accepted the validity of the insights of the charismatic prophets. (5) All of these indicate that there is need for dissent in the Church, but a dissent that is patient enough to bring about gradual evolutionary change.

Church and Justice: Emerging Patterns

The official teachings of the Church in the recent past, as is seen in *Pacem in Terris* of John XXIII, *The Church in the Modern World* and *Religious Freedom* of Vatican II, the encyclicals of Paul VI, *Octogesima Adveniens* and *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, as well as the document of the 1971 Synod on *Justice in the World*, show the Church's commitment to the justice paradigm of the gospel — the call to the integral liberation of the people and their structures.

It would appear appropriate to make a historical parenthesis here and say that saints and sages, theologians and seers, and authorities in the Church were not the only ones who contributed to our understand-

ing of the message of the Gospel and its relevant interpretation for our times. Secular happenings, too, had their impact. I quote from Wackenheim in the article referred to above:

> "The Vatican Council declares that man has a right to religious freedom. The nature of this freedom is that all men should be exempt from all constraint exercised by individuals, social groups or any human power, so that no one is forced to act against his conscience in a religious matter or prevented from acting according to his conscience". This confirms the substance of Article 10 of the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* (26th August 1789), of Article 18 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (10 December 1948), and of Article 9 of the *European Convention for the Protection of the Rights of Man and of Fundamental Freedom* (14 November 1950)....
>
> "We must begin by acknowledging the debt that the Christian world owes to all those individuals and groups who are at the root of the various declaration! Many of these pioneers were not Christians and some of them were forced to oppose the Churches in order to gain victory for their ideals... It seems obvious that the first section of the declaration *Dignitatis Humanae* (see 2, 8) substantially reproduces the arguments of the eighteenth century philosophers in favour of tolerance. The Council would have gained in stature by acknowledging this openly."

I included here the above quotation to emphasize the fact that our faith response to the Gospel in our own times has to be rooted in the teachings of the Bible, and has to be enlightened by the faith response of Christians through the centuries. This should include the teaching office of the Church in its exercise of discernment and direction, as well as the charismatic and prophetic contribution of many believers. But the Gospel interpretation for our days has also to take into account the movement of the Spirit in the outside world, that is, among those who do not formally belong to any of the churches.

Challenge to Priests and Religious Today

Using the above as a background, we may ask now how we, priests and religious, are to be at the service of the Kingdom ? I suggest the following. All along I have pointed out some of the forces at work in the Church during the course of history. This indicates that there is in each era a creative tension in the Church between tradition and reinterpretation of the Gospel. This is a reality that all who are at the service of the kingdom have to accept not as a curse, but as a challenge and as an opportunity. There is also a growing realization of the dignity of every human person and his or her rights to food, clothing and shelter. These aspects are developed in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* nn. 30-31. In this context it becomes more and more evident that there is no genuine Christian life without engaging ourselves to the integral liberation of men and women. Hence, a concerted study is needed to understand the national and international linkages of the present state

of poverty in the world. To interpret reality in the light of the Gospel it is necessary today for us to have a deeper understanding of the events in the Church and in the world, because the forces that shape the Church's orientation include events in and out of the Church. Thus, we need to go beyond the artificial division of secular and sacred in the history of humankind, and see the whole of history as the arena in which God carries out God's redemptive work.

Any interpretation of reality must be based on some lived experience. In order for us to see the world from the standpoint of the neglected ones, the little ones of Yahweh, we need a lived experience of the life of the poor people. This lived experience is not had once for all, but must be periodically renewed so that our frame of reference remains constantly the situation of the real poor people. Our theological reflection and action programmes will have to evolve from the joint search we make together with the poor men and women.

From the above it follows that, in terms of methodology, we move away from a service model to a participative model. In the service model, we go out to serve and come back to the ease and comfort of our own safe hearth. We are never fully identified with the people — their hopes, fears and aspirations. Our otherness remains. In a participative model, we become one with the group. We go as listeners, learners and as co-searchers. We experience the hopelessness and helplessness of the people. The poor is no more an abstract word but people with faces and names. This promotes commitment and releases emotional energy for action. By joining hands with all people of good will and by concerted political and civil action we break down structures that perpetuate injustice.

It seems to me that only in a participative approach can we really announce to the people in a meaningful way the Jubilee and Banquet messages of the Gospel. It makes clear to us, and to the people, that peace is no mere absence of conflict but the result of the people's struggle for justice. Such realization helps us to become announcers of the Good News of Jesus, and messengers of His Easter hope. What Bühlmann says in *Courage, Church!* is appropriate here:

> "The resurrection of Jesus, after his condemnation and execution, guarantees that there is no misfortune, no desperate situation that cannot be mastered, thanks to the faithfulness and the creative power of God. His is the strength that will open all the graves dug by darkness and despair.
>
> "This hope, albeit eschatological, is operative already in our own times. It spurs us to step out boldly towards the 'promised land', to break the vicious circles created by ignorance and disease, poverty and violence, and all that makes no sense in life. The Christian cannot remain apathetic, lethargic or indiffe-

nent but must set about building a world of reconciliation and salvation. Whenever we give food to the hungry or work to the workless, whenever we restore dignity to the shame-faced or freedom to the oppressed, whenever we grant forgiveness to a sinner or give fresh hope to the one in despair, we enact Easter, in that we get the better of a situation devoid of hope. The Easter event thus becomes a thoroughly up-to-date reality, and not a fine story of the once-upon-a-time — a reality that will stay up-to-date until the *parousia*. And we are present all over again as our Lord and Saviour passes on his way.

"Those actions, then, become, analogously, 'sacramental signs', for they give us live experience of God present and active in human history.

"The specific service which the Church has to render to the world has nothing to do with technical advice, masterly pronouncements or generous 'aid' hand-outs. Her *idée fixe* should be the idea of hope. Her basic state of mind should be one of confident trust Her task is to radiate light where there is darkness, to speak words of hope where there is despair, to inject fresh courage into the hearts that are dispirited, and thus to preach salvation to all men."

I will conclude by saying that the challenge to the priests and religious today, as they try to understand their call to serve the Kingdom, is to evolve a liberative mysticism that will make them messengers of the Easter hope both within and outside the Church Their task today is to see that the Church becomes a leaven in society, and a leaven is effective only when it loses its identity in the Church. As members they have to take the responsibility of shaping the thinking and action of the Church so that they are in tune with the Gospel values. In this approach to life, one is going to face much suffering, and even crucifixion. The challenge is to keep loving those who persecute us and thus by our life proclaim reconciliation, and keep hoping in spite of the hopelessness of the human situation. This is the proclamation of the Kingdom for our times.

(*Continued from p.* 233)

the scope, content and significance of scientific theology but also reflects the seven basic features and steps of the scientific way itself: disputation, clarification, consultation of revelation and tradition, innovation, coordination, proportion and conclusion. The consultation of revelation is thereby ultimately the consultation of God Himself; and the consultation of tradition focuses on the synthesis between the ecclesiastico-theological and the (in the case of Africans) native-African tradition.[1]

1. Cf. my earlier article, "Towards the Foundation of Theological Thinking as Literary Culture" in *Shalom*, vol. 1.4, pp. 253-260.

Do We Need Scientific Theology?

Rev. Fr J. EGBULEFU*

Introduction

I want to remain a theologian and nothing else; but of what kind ? The type that I perceive arising from the biblical-patristic-highmedieval tradition is for me a model. From there derives the stand that I take on the question about the necessity of scientific theology.

Part I

1. *Disputation*

There are some people who believe that students should be discouraged from learning scientific theology on the ground that such critical studies would blunt the students' capacity for an independent experience of God and a response to Him While respecting the motives behind this argument, I do not think it will survive scrutiny. A moment's reflection will reveal that there is no such thing as a completely independent, unconditioned experience of God capable of catapulting us into an unconditional response to Him.

2. *Clarification*

Experiences of God have their existence and their meaning in a continuum, a continual stream of human conversation about them, which, in its most formalized and articulate form, we call Scientific Theology. A fundamental reason for studying theology in an academic context is to get into this conversation at its highest level: metaphysique-dogmatique-mystique — to listen and to participate. The conversation does not stop at reflecting on the multiple and diverse experiences of God in the history of mankind, in the light of the model samples of such experiences in the history of salvation. It also seeks to offer students instruction and guidance with regard to the theoretical problems of knowledge, experience, aesthetics, literary communication and intellectual method, so that they will learn 1) how to articulate their own experiences of God; 2) discernment in the use of others' experiences, to expand their own potentialities in responding to God; and 3) the fact that no single method or approach can answer all the questions that

*Rev. Fr J. Egbulefu is a Nigerian priest of the Umuahia Diocese in Nigeria. He lectured at the Catholic Institute of West Africa, Porthercourt, Nigeria, and is at present doing his Habilitation in Dogmatics in Bonn His address is Am Alter Friedhoff 13, D-5300 Bonn 1, West Germany

may legitimately be asked about the human experience of God, nor exhaust the sources of possible interest within this experience.

3. *Consultation of Revelation and Tradition*

Is it not true, my God, that in my attempt to articulate my earliest experiences of you, I 'listened' first to those standard scholastics especially Aquinas and Anselm, so good at investigating, until the Fathers dawned on me, especially Athenagoras and Origen, and that, entering into the patristic world, Augustin and Cyprian beckoned me, to lay bare before me our common African treasures ? The great insights came, and details fell neatly into place, in the light of the logic of these thinkers and with the help of the biblical, especially Johannine, conceptions. What is more basic to the reasoning of our black people than 'theological' thinking, the looking for and finding in Gcd (= theos) the reason (= logos) of reality ? What is more primeval to our black people's world-view than religion ? What else is the crystallization point of our people's daily thinking and living than Gcd ? What is more primordial to our piety than being for (= pro) the High God by clinging lively to the word (= verbum), said to us by those He sent to act for (= pro) Him as truly His word (= verbum) ? What is thus more original to us than our 'pro-verbial' and 'symbolic-allegorical' thinking ? In what way do our people communicate as conspicuously as in proverbs and symbols ? How else do we build our proverbs and symbols than by assembling traits taken from the particular data in our surrounding to compose the rules of thumb, the succinct principles according to which we act ? How else did our ancestry compose such models than by imitating Nature, with which they lived closedly and which they were good at observing ? What more was the Cosmos for them than the work of art designed by the Creator for stimulation ? Why else did they look to Nature for inspiration than because it delights and thereby teaches ? For, who can 'edify' a man, without first 'elevating' him ? Is it not this delight and elevation that underlies our hilarious temperament, spontaneity and liveliness, and culminates in our humour and openness, our joy and festivals ? Is it not so, that in the heat of the summer we beat the drums, bend the waist and move the hips, as we intone one song after the other and, at the height of the chorus, shout our joy, firing several shots in rapid succession into the sky, to quicken and increase our hilarity, out of happiness and gratitude to the most High God and Creator ? Is the symbolic thinking not the basis of our dialogical reasoning, and this, in turn, the foundation of our community spirit ?

4. *Innovation*

Yet, this is only one side of the medal. Our people do not find in God only the cause of their joy. They, too, are faced with suffering: poverty, famine inspite of the farming, sickness, and similar hard realities of life. Under such adversities, what is their thinking ? Do they see the rationale of their suffering also in God ?, How far do they

see the hand of God in adverse situations ? How far do they believe to be experiencing God Himself in the moment of their suffering ? Here we ought to begin a critique of our native thinking. Take the way it explains sickness. First, it lets our people cultivate a magical conception of sickness, according to which one evil spirit or another is responsible for the suffering: it has taken possession of the patient ! Or, secondly, it leads to a pathological conception with an air of the supernatural, according to which the cause of the sickness is a sin committed consciously or unconsciously by the patient, so that sickness itself appears as a punishment from God, like among the Jews. This leaves no place for a third conception, for instance the physiological understanding of the cause of a sickness, in the imagination of our people. And here lies the limit of the native intelligence, be it said without any reason for shame: for, all human intelligence is limited by time and space. The modern African theological intelligence has the task of retaining those aspects of the native thinking that have perennial values and must seek, through new insights won from later developments in man's search for reality, to supplement such perennial elements and thus transcend the horizon of the old magical thinking.

Accordingly, it is obvious that the cause of every sickness cannot be an evil spirit or another, and it does not seem possible to see every sickness as a punishment from God, without bordering upon absurdity. It is an overgeneralisation, and theologically wrong, to say that the sin of a patient is the cause of all his sicknesses. Sin is not the cause of every sickness. Christ Jesus Himself said it in the case of the man born blind (Jn 9:1-41, esp. 1-3, 40-41). Rather, certain sicknesses are there so that the works of God might be displayed in the patient. This new idea is lacking in the African native way of thinking. With such insight, the modern African theological intelligence, correcting and overcoming the level of the old thinking, can now develop a new stand. A theological reflection regarding the suffering of the sick would not be aimed at knowing from God the sins the patient must have committed, but rather, at finding whether and how God wants to reveal His goodness in and through the sick. Consequently, this reflection puts the will of God in the forefront, and then seeks God's help towards the cure, and this on the basis of the theologian's and the patient's belief that God is all-powerful and can cure even the present sickness, whether it came from Him as punishment or any other way.

What has been said here about the example of the sickness-phenomenon is valid also for the other aspects of suffering. The theologian must be ready to consult God about the problems of the society in which he lives, and this consultation must not so much intend to know from God what the cause of these problems may be, as to request God for their solution; for no matter what the causes be, whether the problems come from heaven or from earth, God has the power to solve them. He can do that directly (as in the case of miracles, still possible in our day !), or by enlightening some one not just on why the problem has arisen, but on how to get it solved. Asking God's mind means thus not so much to ask Him 'why this ?', but 'how do we get this solved ?'. This brings us to the second part of our exposé.

Part II

5. *Coordination*

To live successfully, the human being has to be aware of God and society as his two inescapable milieus, and adjust his behaviour to harmonize with what is going on around him, namely God's government of the world and the dynamics of change of society. This involves making God, society and oneself work together, more and more harmoniously, till an organic unity in the way of living is developed. This life struggle I call the coordination of one's life. The theologian as the believing God-seeker searching for insights into the mind of God and researching with faith into God's Truth and Grace, has the difficult job of helping himself and helping fellow men with whom he lives in society to achieve this coordination of life. He has to be conversant with society and conversant with God. For, society looks to him to contribute to its welfare from the point of view of God's Truth and Grace. To draw from his God-insights with what to support and accompany society, he must not so much talk *on* God, as talk *to* God and talk *with* Him, in order to talk efficiently *of* Him. And this means: to nurse personal, intimate contact with God, deepening more and more the contact, seeking to get more and more familiar with Him, in order to know His voice and be able to discern it from the noise of men. This contact that God Himself has initiated, is to be cultivated so as to lead towards more and more inwardness; for, God is deep. He takes the initiative and we respond to Him, and so enter into dialogue with Him.

6. *Proportion*

Yet, whoever speaks to and with God should observe balance in what he is doing. A balance not only of doxology and petition, but also of reason and emotion, appears to me to be indispensable for a true profound contact with God. Not reason alone: a dry intellect with scarcely any emotional accompaniment, an abstract thought devoid of warmth; nor mere emotional overflow without serious reasoning, naive and superficial overflooding without any solidly established basis of ratiocination. Reflection on God is not a turning loose of emotion, in order to dodge and escape reason, nor a screwing reasoning to the sky, in order to strangulate emotion. Rather: both 'gadgets' which God has implanted in us and which complement one another must come into play in the talk to and with God. For, we can come into truly intensive contact with God only in our totality, without which there is no tranquility: contact with Him in our peace, not in our pieces!

Part III

7. *Conclusion*

The purpose of this article was to take stand on the current issue concerning the necessity of scientific theology. I have affirmed the necessity in such a way that the run of my thought not only articulates

(Concluded on p. 229)

Forum

The Eucharist, Ecumenism and Dialogue

— A Letter from a Christian Ashram —

Christa Prema Seva Ashram,
Shivajinagar, Pune 411005.
12th December, 1984.

To The Members of the first Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC)

Dear Friends,

We are a mixed (Indian, European, men, women, religious, lay) ecumenical (Anglican, Roman Catholic, Evangelical Hindu) community living in an ashram originally founded by an Anglican priest, Fr Jack Winslow, in 1927, dormant for a few years in the sixties and reopened in 1972 at the invitation of the Trustees of the property by the Indian provinces of the Anglican Community of St Mary the Virgin and the Roman Catholic Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus We share the vision of the founder, namely, to live the Gospel in terms of the Indian situation and cultural and spiritual traditions, and be a kind of "cross-roads of the Spirit" where people of all races, cultures, classes, religions and beliefs can come together and share their gropings and insights, without being a threat to each other. A central preoccupation of the community is to come to a deeper understanding of the relation of the mystery of Christ to the Self-communication of God through the other spiritual and religious traditions of man.

We are writing to you because we have read your "Final Report", which greatly impressed us and made us think you might be interested in our experience as an ecumenical community which, paradoxical as it may seem, has always recognized that the Eucharist is our bond of union and our centre as a community, in spite of, and may be also because of, the differences between the positions of our Churches which have obliged us to work together, through much anguish at times, but with great understanding from our Bishops, to the point we are now at, where we can without violating the ground-rules of our Churches, participate as far as possible in the same Eucharist and accept with great inner freedom that if we have to submit for the present to some of the restrictions imposed by these positions, our fundamental faith is the same, and no personal lack of mutual respect or love is involved.

What we particularly want to share with you, however, is our experience of the reservation of the Sacrament, which we have had from the beginning, as at first we were all either Anglicans or "Roman" (or

Hindu I) with special reference to pages 22-24 of your "Report" where you speak of the "two complementary movements" which we discern in the mystery of the Eucharist, viz, the Self-gift of Christ to us and our vital response, and the very understandable fear felt by some that the practice of adoration of Christ in the reserved Sacrament may suggest too localized and static a presence that disrupts the "movement as well as the balance of the whole Eucharistic action". In this connection we would like to quote from a contribution we were asked to make a year or two ago to *Fiat*, the journal of the Community of St Mary the Virgin, on "The Eucharist in an Ashram Setting". It was inspired in part by a passage in Fr Bede Griffiths' book *The Marriage of East and West* in which he says:

> An ashram is not primarily a community like a monastery. It is a group of disciples gathered round a master, or guru, who come to share the prayer life, the experience of God, of the guru. The life therefore centres not on the common prayer of the liturgy, but on the personal prayer of each member. It is the hour of meditation at dawn and sunset, the traditional time for meditation in India, which forms the basis of the life, the silent communion with God, and the common prayer of the community is as it were the overflow from this.

Our response to this was:

"...... This is not wholly true of us, for though we give no less importance to long hours of personal prayer, our only Guru is the risen Lord, present among us in Word and Sacrament and by his Spirit in each member of the community. (The âchârya or head of the community is seen simply as facilitator for the Spirit in the group). For us, therefore, the high points of each day *as community* are the Eucharistic celebration ànd the three arati (waving of a light before some one or some holy object as an expression of veneration) times before dawn, at midday and at sunset when we come together to allow our Guru to draw us ever more deeply into the great movement of return to the Father which is the movement of his own inner life.... Wordless, even conceptless, sitting in the present of the Eucharist fits in very well with both Hindu tradition and the sacramental theology of Vatican II, which insists that the reservation of the sacrament must be closely related to the Eucharistic sacrifice and seen as the 'application of its fruits'. According to the earliest Hindu tradition, the role of the guru is not primarily to focus the attention of his disciple on himself as object of devotion, but rather to awaken the disciple to the presence within his own being of that Mystery by which the guru himself lives. This seems to have a marvellous resonance with the risen Christ remaining sacramentally present to our faith in order to intensify within us the gift of the Spirit, the 'spring of water leaping up into eternal life.' (Jn 4:14). We are especially conscious of this great movement of 'return to the Father' (Jn 16:28) at the end of the evening ârati time when we explicitly draw all our fellow-men upon the earth into it "in the words the Lord himself gave us," the *Our Father*.

Forgive us for sharing all this with you. We do it because as we read your "Report", some of us felt a deep sense of affinity with your prayerful concern for unity among us all, and we wanted you for this, and ask your prayers for our own ongoing efforts to contribute to the evolution in our Churches of a form of celebration of the

[illegible] more suited to the Indian context. (The CNI has given us a [illegible] mandate for this). This clearly involves much prayer, study and prayerful reflection on experience, and the support of your prayer would be a great inspiration and encouragement to us. It is marvellous to see how easily the Eucharist as both Presence and Way to the Father, the "Source without a source", fits into the Hindu way of seeing things; we have found this to be true time and again when our friends share our worship. Next month we are having a two days' informal meeting with two or three theologians and ministers to reflect on our past experience and seek guidelines for the future.[1] It is a slow and deeply inspiring business, and one which has preoccupied this ashram, though unofficially, from the beginning: Fr Jack Winslow himself worked out a form of Eucharistic celebration for India which, though never officially adopted for general use and out of date today, remains as a challenge and inspiration to us.

Though we know that many of you are not on ARCIC II, we would like to assure you of our prayer, not only for each of you, but also for the new Commission, that the work you have begun with such width of vision and deep wisdom may be worthily continued. We would like to end with the prayer we say just before the *Our Father* when we celebrate the Eucharist according to the rite of the CNI, as we feel it applies not only to us as community but also to us and you:

> Father, we thank you for the union of mind and heart that you have created among us by the gift of your Spirit. With your Son we pray that full and visible union may soon be established among us and all Christians, as you will and by the means you will. Amen.

Sara GRANT, rscj (R. C.)
Acharya

Brigitte VON LOESCH, csmv (Anglican)
(Sub-acharya)

1 This meeting took place on January 26th and 27th under the leadership of Fr Paul Puthanangady, S.D.B., Director of the NBCLC, Bangalore, and was extremely fruitful

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(*Continued from p. 247*)

anyone. This does not mean that the psalmists are above the limitations of belonging to a small people who had to struggle hard to survive in the conflictual world of their time. Let us not be so sure of our superiority. Do not "Christian" nations today think in terms of a possible conflict between various Powers, and do they not also think it important to win and to defeat their "enemies" in the event of a conflict materialising ?

The martial imagery of the messianic psalms must be understood against the background of the divine war against the forces of evil. The this-worldly preoccupations of the psalmists are not a disadvantage: Christian believers tend to be too other-worldly. Thus they have laid themselves open to the accusation that their faith is in "the pie in the sky when they die" "Earthly favours", when received from God's hands, became signs of his blessing for believers. So the approach is not materialistic.

C. M. CHERIAN, S.J.

Notes

Christians in the Census of India 1981

This year has finally seen the publication of the religious statistics of India collected in the 1981 Census.[1] Before informing the readers of some of the contents of this book we must point out three important characteristics of the religious figures of this Census: (1) the Census generally records only the religions in a broad sense: Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, etc., including a section on "religion not stated". No sectarian subdivisions (e.g Catholic, Protestant, CNI, etc) are generally recorded. (2) This year the Census records the religion of the head of the household as that of the whole family. Only for "institutional households" is the religion of the individual members recorded separately. (3) Assam is not included in the 1981 Census.

According to the Census 1981 there was that year in India a total population of 665,287,849. They are divided as follows:

	Population	*Percentage*
Hindus	549,779,481	82.64
Muslims	75,512,439	11.35
Christians	16,165,447	2 43
Sikhs	13,078,146	1.96
Buddhists	4,719,796	0 71
Jains	3,206,038	0.48
Other Religions	2,766,285	0.42
Religion not stated	60,217	0 01

What may astonish many people is that Christians have the slowest growth rate recorded for the 10 years between 1971 and 1981. According to the 1971 Census there were then 13,844,031 Christians, and by 1981 they grew by 16 17% By comparison in the same period Buddhists grew by 22.52%, Jains by 23.69%, Hindus by 24.15%, Sikhs by 26.15% and Muslims by 30.59% One should also keep in mind that the average population growth of the country was in this period 24.69%, so that Christians lag by more than 8% behind the average growth. This alone should lay to rest bogus propaganda about the dangers of Christian mass conversions. If anything the mobility is in the opposite direction!

Is the explanation of these figures to be sought in the hypothesis that Christians have taken more easily to responsible parenthood than other communities? This seems to be one of the lines of explanation,

1. *Household Population By Religion of Head of Household*, ed. by V. S. Verma, I.A.S., Registrar General & Census Commissioner for India, Census of India 1981, Series-1 India, Paper 3 of 1984, New Delhi 1985, pp. xvii-104, Rs. 9.80.

if we have a look at the statistics provided by another Census of India 1981 publication[2]. It says in its Statement 14:

> The total fertility rate in India (excluding Assam) is 3·9 in rural areas, 2·8 in urban areas, and 3·6 for total areas. It may be noticed that fertility is higher among Muslims, followed by Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and Christians. At national level, TFR for both Jains and Christians is identical, being 2·6. However, both in rural and urban areas the TFR of Jains is higher than that of Christians. This apparent contradiction in TFR for all areas is due to the rural-urban distribution differentials in these groups.[3]

We note that the TFR for Sikhs is 3.4, for Hindus and Buddhists 3.6 and for Muslims 4.1.

These statistics do not tell us the reason for the lower fertility. On the one hand it is remarkable that the Christian female ratio compared to the males is by far the highest among the various communities. They have for every 1000 males, 992 females, while the Buddhists have 953, the Jains 941, the Muslim 937, the Hindus 933, and the Sikhs 880.[4]

But on the other hand we also notice in the *Report and Tables* that Christian women tend to marry rather later and therefore the percentage of married women in the fertile age (between 15 and 49) is only 62.15, while for the Sikhs it is 70 40, for Jains 72.09, for Buddhists 79.26, for Muslims 80 42 and for Hindus 82.35.[5]

How reliable are the religious statistics of the Census ? Only an expert could here venture an opinion. Is there a more or less conscious policy of lowering the number of Christans ? This hypothesis would need some proof to be taken seriously. Given the fact that statistically the Muslims fare very well in the Census it is difficult to accept the hypothesis of an anti-minority bias.

Statistics of Orthodox and Protestant Christians and of members of the Christian sects are not available to me, and it is, therefore, difficult to check the census statistics with independant Christian sources But the figures given in the Catholic Directories are such that by comparing them to the Census one is led to at least one of three possible conclusions: either (i) the number of other Christians than Roman Catholics is relatively very small, or (ii) the Catholic figures are inflated, or (iii) the Census figures for Christians are too low.

Thus the 1980 *Catholic Directory of India*, quoting the 1977 *Statistical Year Book of the Church* gives the number of Catholics in India as 9,704,000, and the 1984 Directory (presumably taking from the same source), counts 11,707,000 Catholics in the country. As the time of the collection of data for this last source would be close enough to that of the 1981 Census which gives the number of Christians as over 16 millions, this would mean that the number of Catholics is almost three times the number of all other Christians put together, which seems difficult to believe.

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2. *Report & Tables Based on 5 per cent Sample Data*, ed. by P. PADMANABHA, I.A.S., Registrar General & Census Commissioner for India, Census of India, 1981 Series-1 India, Part-II-Special, New Delhi 1984, pp vi-106-569. Rs. 46.60.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
4. *Household Population*. . ., p. vii.
5. *Report & Tables*. . ., pp. 52-53.

A couple of sample states may lead us to similar conclusions. According to the Census, the Christian population in Madhya Pradesh was 286,072 in 1971 and 351,972 in 1981, an increase of 23.04% in ten years. According to the Catholic Directories the total number of Catholics in the eleven ecclesiastical jurisdictions in the state added up to 298,952 in 1980 and to 320,574 in 1984, a growth of 7.24% in four years. This would leave a remnant of about 40,000 for all the other churches in that State. Again the number seems too low, although no statistics are available to confirm this impression. Similar in Bihar, the Christian population is said to be 740,186 in the 1981 Census. The Catholic directories give figures that add up, in the seven dioceses of the State, to 544,184 for 1980 and 579,967 for 1984. This would leave a margin of less than two lakhs for the other churches, well less than half the Catholic population. Finally, Rajasthan's 29,353 Catholics in 1984 (or 24,188 in 1980) compare very favourably to the Census 1981 Christian population of 39,568, leaving hardly much more than a margin of 10,000 for the other churches.

What has been said entitles us to conclude that population statistics, including those that come from church sources, must be received with a good deal of caution. We should also perhaps not be particularly concerned about the proportional regression in the number of Christians in the country — the life of the spirit is totally outside the parameters of human statistics. Anybody aware of the serious population problem in our country could not but be glad if his community gives a lead in the line of responsible parenthood. It would surely be petty-minded and unchristian to be guided by communalistic fears in the assessment of this fact. Whatever be its truth, the value of the Christian presence must be sought elsewhere than in obtaining numerical victories over other communities!

The data of the Census offer us other statistics of interest to religious sociologists more than to theologians. The Appendix A of the *Household Population* gives 183 subdivisions that are grouped together in the general statistics as "other religions and persuasions". From this we learn that 71,630 Indians gave themselves as Zoroastrians, and 5,618 as Jews. There are 25,416 "adivasis" by religion, but to them one would add 1,367 "tribals" (in Nagaland), 119 "animists", and, oddly enough, 25,985 whose religion is simply "Non-Christian" (in Manipur, Meghalaya and Nagaland) together with 796 "Pagans" in the same three states and 1,215 "Heathen" in Manipur. Some other tribals have rather given their specific tribal identity as their religions: as mere examples we find the record of 484 Oraons, 32,252 Santals, 1,481 Garos, 6,975 Gonds, 4,133 Hos, 148,437 Khasis, 1,160 Mundas, 1,296 Nagas... One may also note 3,382 Nirankaris, and that very small numbers of apparently Hindu believers have rather entered themselves under geographical or caste terms like Agarwal, Bengali, Gujarati, Maharashtrian, Marathi, Marwari, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, etc. Perhaps of greater interest is that a total of 29,086 persons corresponding to 5,117 households consider themselves as "atheists" (predominantly in rural areas of Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur and Bihar, to which one could add 816 humanists ("manab dharma"),

half of them in Maharashtra. Communism, Marxism or Socialism are not entered at all as religious persuasions.

At the other end of the picture, Part VII-A of the Census[6] informs us of the uses to which the 151,001,488 census houses in the country (one for every 4.4 inhabitants) are put. We have altogether 1,525,939 places of worship, that is, one for every 436 persons. These are predominantly found in rural India, for there are 6.09 places of worship in rural areas for every one in urban areas, while there are only 3.22 buildings in general in rural areas for every one in urban areas.

Finally one must refer social workers to the data they will find in two other volumes of the Census 1981, about the Physically Handicapped[7] ("totally crippled" "totally blind" or "totally dumb") and details about the general population in the volume *Report and Tables* already mentioned earlier (note 2).

G. Gispert-Sauch, S.J.

Krishna and Theology

A Bibliographical Note

The time is past when the study of Hinduism consisted mainly in the analysis of philosophical texts of the great schools or of the thought of contemporary authors. In recent decades there has been a great deal of interest in the popular stories and mythological cults that so pervade the Indian scene. Theologians have not been absent from this complex field. It is already many years ago that Fr C. Bulcke explored in his speeches and writings the ethical potential of the Rāma story. Fr R. Antoine also became quite engrossed in the study of the Ramaite epic from another angle. Abhishiktananda has more recently drawn our attention to the richness of the Śaiva myths, e.g. in his *Guru and Disciple*, and the Śiva figure has been the object of many scholarly studies like those of Stella Kramrisch, Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty and Jacques Scheuer.

In recent years there has also been a growing interest in the sources, the symbolism and the theology around the Krishna myth. This is not strange because the story of the cowherd-lover-teacher-warrior God is not only constantly recalled in Indian art and folklore but has more recently acquired a sort of universal citizenship, specially through the popularity of the Hare Krishna and other neo-Hindu movements in the West. The fairly long cycle of Krishna stories is no longer the private property of orthodox or pious Hindu households, or the main inspiration of only Indian artists: they have become familiar to a large section of the Western world as well.

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6. *Uses to which Census Houses are Put*, ed. by P. Padmanabha, I.A.S., Registrar General & Census Commissioner for India, Census of India 1981, Series-I, Part VII-A, New Delhi 1983, pp. iv-119, Rs 13.00

7. *The Physically Handicapped Report & Tables*, ed. by P. Padmanabha, I.A.S., Registrar General & Census Commissioner for India, Census of India 1981, Series-I India, Part VII-B, pp. iv-213. New Delhi 1983, Rs 17.20.

The interest of recent theological research centers on the significance and religious meaning of the Krishna story and the symbols associated with it. Gone are the days of controversy when the story was scrutinised under the historical lense to prove its unreliability (falsity), or when Krishna was gleefully presented as an immoral character unworthy of the divine honours attributed to him. Today's interests are no longer historical or moralistic. They center on the symbolic, on how the myth is perceived in the tradition of India.

Two important books have recently been sent to this Journal for review [1] which we would like to present here in the context of other recent works touching on the same theme from different angles. Noel Sheth's doctoral thesis at the Harvard University has a very clear focus and an equally lucid development. He takes three important writings of the Sanskrit tradition from different periods dealing with the Krishna story and analyses how the divinity of Krishna is presented in them:

> My approach is neither philosophical, nor theological, nor psychological, nor sociological and so forth; it is phenomenological: letting the texts speak for themselves. I have focused not on Krishna's divinity in itself but on Krishna as he is progressively understood by his believers. This evolution in their understanding of Krishna's divinity and identity does not imply a process of divinization: as their understanding of what it means to be divine became more enlightened and refined, the believers endeavoured to remove the blemishes from their earlier portraits of Krishna thus making his divinity shine forth more brilliantly (p. xiv).

The three documents studied are: 1. the *Harivamśa*, which is really a Purāṇa attached as a large appendix to the Mahabharata. As the title suggests, it deals with genealogy of Krishna. Like its parent body, the Mahabharata, the *Harivamśa* is a rather composite work. While the first 98 chapters are dated at around 300 A.D. by scholars like P. L. Vaidya, the editor of the Pune critical edition, the last 20 chapters were added between that date and around 1050 A.D. 2. The second source studied by Sheth is the *Visnu Purāna*, which he does not dare to date. L Renou would place it between the 3rd and the 5th century A.D. 3. Finally there is the great classical text of the Krishna cult, one which has an enormous popularity and influence, the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. This is definitely posterior to the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, and generally placed around the 10th century, although very recently F. Hardy would move its date up slightly, to probably the 9th century A.D.

Sheth studies the Krishna story very methodically and carefully, incident by incident, in each of the three basic texts, showing the points of similarity and also the differences as they result from the literary genres used and a more developed sense of the divinity of Krishna. Not that the idea that Krishna is God is absent from the earlier text: the idea is clearly there, but as a secondary theme, so to say (though not

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1. **The Divinity of Krishna.** By Noel SHETH. *New Delhi, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, Pvt. Ltd*, 1984. Pp. xvi-180. Rs. 80 **Vallabhācharya on the Love Games of Krishna**, by James D. REDINGTON. *Delhi, Motilal Banarasidass*, 1983. Pp. xii-492. Rs. 140.

necessarily a later one). The main concern of the *Harivamśa* is to present Krishna as a hero. Reflecting on Sheth's work the American scholar Daniel H. H. Ingalls, his adviser, writes:

> It would make an instructive account if one could identify the different attitudes with different social classes or with the social and intellectual pressures of different periods of Indian history. But the evidence of the sources does not permit much more than guesswork on such matters. In general of course one can attribute the origins of the *Harivamśa* narrative to a nomadic cattle-raising culture. The ideals and proprieties of the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* on the other hand are those of the respectable Indian middle class some centuries later. But the assignment of class origins to the *Bhāgavata* seems to me a desperate project. The *Bhāgavata* draws from all classes, as it does from all of India's intellectual traditions. It does this without being at all interested in social questions and interested in intellectual questions only as far as they may illustrate or fortify its doctrine of love. What is important to the *Bhāgavata* is to feel God, to be moved by Him (xii).

Sheth's book has four fairly well defined chapters. The first gives a summary of the whole Krishna story in the *Harivamśa*. In the second, the same story as it comes in the two Purāṇas is studied, incident after incident, and the differences between the three versions are shown. The third chapter deals with Krishna's nature and his relation to creation, in the three texts. The author includes also a study of the nature of bhakti that emerges from the stories, and the relation of Krishna to salvation. The fourth chapter presents a summary and a conclusion. There is a certain amount of repetition, but the argument is always clear and scholarly. The occasional references to the traditional commentators and to modern scholars remain rather in the background, for the thesis is essentially a study of what the texts themselves say.

As mentioned earlier, the divinity of Krishna is already found in the *Harivamśa*, and not merely, though predominantly, in its later portions. However in this text the divinity is not central, but a peripheral truth in the presentation of Krishna the hero. As Sheth says, "the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* attempt to make the divinity of Krishna, threatened in the *Harivamśa*, shine forth all the more brilliantly" (158). Paradoxically, the more divine Krishna is presented, the more humane, loving and compassionate he appears (cf. p. 162), and can indeed be worshipped as the refuge of the poor (*akiñcanānām parā gatih*) (*Bh P* 10.89.17). Thus we learn from Sheth's book not only the various ways in which the figure of Krishna has been presented, but also the various gifts of the writers of these stories. In the three texts we see, respectively, the poet, the teacher and the mystic, offering us their different visions of the Cowherd God.

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Among other books that have appeared recently dealing with Krishna bhakti, we should mention Friedhelm Hardy's *Viraha-Bhakti*,

The Early History of Kṛṣṇa Devotion in South India.[2] This is a monumental work of more than 700 pages showing convincingly, I think, that the Krishna legend travelled from North India to the South and merged there with the existing Tamil culture. The legend was then highly elaborated by the Tamil bhaktas, specially those of the caṅkam literature and the Ālvārs. This is perhaps the first detailed study of the Ālvārs under this aspect. Perhaps the boldest thesis of the book is that the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* originated in Scuth India and represents a Sanskritised (therefore "universalising") adaptation of the Ālvār religion. The author is a scholar, equally at home in Tamil and Sanskrit, not to mention other Indian languages, who shows the integrating function of the Krishna cult precisely at the time when the Sanskrit culture was losing its strength and the separate regional literatures were emerging. For Hardy the Ālvār God Māyōn is literally a translation of the Krishna of the North.

As the title of the work indicates, the characteristic of Krishna mysticism is the primacy it gives to the love in separation, the *viraha-bhakti*. This may seem strange, for the Krishna story seems to stress precisely the nearness of the avatāra to the simple pastoral folks of Vṛndaban, manifested specially in the games they all played with Him. However, the whole story really leads to the experience, painful but purifying, of the separation of the Lover from immediate perception. This pain leads to the discovery of the presence of the Lord in the whole universe, then the whole of creation becomes the locus where one discovers the presence of God. Thus out of this highest form of bhakti there arises that fusion of the two great orbs in the horizon of our existence, of which Teilhard de Chardin spoke, the orb of the world and the orb of the divine.

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This leads us to the second book we want to review here, which is James Redington's introduction to and translation of the central portion of Vallabhācārya's *Subodhinī*.[3] This is itself a commentary on the life of Krishna as presented in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. The author has translated the section which comments on the significance of the love games of Krishna, i.e. chapters 29-35 of the tenth book (*skandha*)— omitting, however, chapter 34 which is less relevant to the central theme. No one who has never attempted to translate the deceitfully simple grammar of Vallabha can realise the effort required to produce such an intelligible and even elegant translation as Redington has given us. Vallabha's style is so elliptical and elusive that without the help of the commentaries and even of the living tradition of the school, translation would be imposible. Redington uses both to advantage and has thus given us the first translation into a Western language of Vallabha's text. This translation will be an unavoidable point of reference for future studies of the *puṣṭimārga*.

The book has a short but substantial introduction pointing out some of the important features of the master's thought. This intro-

2. *Delhi, Oxford University Press*, 1983.
3. See Note 1 above.

duction is by no means exhaustive, and we look forward to a more complete analysis in the future. An important affirmation, which may or may not be accepted by scholars, concerns the importance of the contribution of the aesthetic doctrines of India to Vallabha's teaching. *Bhakti* and aesthetics go together, and there is good reason why the ancient authors called the experience of beauty induced by art a "twin of the taste of God" (*brahmāsvādanasahodara*). We need in India an Urs von Balthasar to integrate our rich aesthetic tradition into theology! Redington's introductory studies the concept of "eligibility" (*adhikāra*), and the technical meaning in Vallabha of *nirodha*. This is translated as "constraint", but it denotes the salvific intent of the Lord in his avatāra, perhaps the "condescension" by which the Infinite limits himself to one historical point.

Vallabha's work is not only a magnificant commentary on some of the most poetic chapters in the *Bhāgavata Purāna* but also a piece of mystic poetry with a rich feeling for the grace of God. Not unlike the way John of the Cross referred to the Canticle of Canticles in his mystical writings, Vallabha uses the erotic poetry of the Purāṇa as a tool for his doctrine of grace However he avoids the purely allegorical approach to the erotic, characteristic of the Christian mystics. Erotic love is not only an external symbol more or less useful for the expression of the divine love The erotic itself is a means whereby the divine love is taught and acquired. Krishna introduces erotic love in order to lead the gopis to a growing passion for him. These cowherdesses, unmarried or married, are presented not only as simple and ignorant. They are also seen as rather worldly, not too concerned about the demands of the *dharma*, in fact as frankly seeking the pleasures of life (as everybody does), more or less consciously. They love with a carnal love, but they are led to raptures of mystical union, and the way to such union passes partly through the pangs of separation.

Accustomed to a different tradition Christians are often embarrassed by the erotic substratum of the Krishna stories. If we can handle this with ease, there is no doubt that we shall discover in this book, even through the translation, an authentic pearl of spiritual literature. Fortunately Redington supplies us with the full Sanskrit original of the text he translates It is given in an appendix of 124 pages, corresponding to the 307 pages of the translation/paraphrase. The translation is enriched with illuminating notes The book should be a help to enter sympathetically into a world which has unfortunately in the past been the object of overhasty and self-righteous criticism.

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Theologians of grace who happen to be Indologists will be happy to know that the Vallabha sampradāya, ever so active, is printing and publishing the great Sanskrit work of its traditions. They are accessible only to specialists, but they provide the basis to work on one of the richest sources of the Indian theologies of grace, the school called the *puṣṭimārga*, the way of "feeding"— of grace as nourishment for the soul. This Vallabha tradition has much to teach us about God's

self-gift to the beloved. Recent publications of the sampradāya include the *Aṇubhāṣya*, with commentaries, in two volumes, the three volumes of the *Tattvadīpanibandha*, and three volumes more of the *Ṣoḍaśagrantha* ("the sixteen works"), and other minor works, all written by Vallabhācārya, and enriched by many commentaries.[5] For those who have no access to Sanskrit there is also the still useful work of Richard Barz, *The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhacarya*[6].

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The Krishna story is a living tradition. This is evident by the amount of Indian art the story has inspired. Much has been published in this line, but we would like to mention monumental publication by the New Delhi National Museum, lavishly illustrated, *The Life of Krishna in Indian Art* by P. Banerji (1978). This is a more ambitious work than the earlier publications by the same National Museum of such works for example, as M S. Randhawa's *Kangra Paintings of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (1960). This can be complemented by the very recent work of the Mexican scholar Sr Benjamin Preciado-Solis, *The Kṛṣṇa Cycle of the Purāṇas*.[7]

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Our study of the Krishna story and its popularity will not be complete if we forget the living tradition of the Krishna mystery plays still being enacted in Mathura and other places of North India. The village boys and girls who represent the Krishna legend on the stage do not only perform an artistic creation, they are participants in a religious re-enactment, as K. Klostermaier reminded us years ago (cf. *Hindu and Christian in Vrindaban*).[8] More recently these plays have been studied by many scholars Already in 1972 we had Norvin Hein's *The Miracle Plays of Mathura* (Oxford University Press). In 1979 Motilal Banarsidass of Delhi, published *The Divine Player, A Study of Kṛṣṇa Līla*, by David R Kinsley In 1981, *At Play with Krishna. Pilgrimage Dramas from Brindavan*, by John Stratton Hawley in association with Shrivatsa Goswami, was published by the Princeton University Press.

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These books are surely only a sample of much recent scholarship that enables us to study today the Krishna religious tradition with much better information than we did formerly. Through these books we get in touch with and interpret a very strong stream of the popular religion in India.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

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5 These works are available in the various centers of the Vallabha Sampradāya in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh or Maharashtra, e g at the Puṣṭi Prakāśan Aḍail, Mahāprabhu Vallabhācārya Mārg, Nayā Shahar, Kishengadh, Ajmer 305802.

6. *Faridabad, Haryana, Thomson Press (India) Ltd.*, 1976.

7. *Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass*, 1984.

8. London, SCM Press, 1969.

Correspondence

The Psalms Again!

Dear Editor,

Regarding the Psalms of our *Prayer of the Church*, Fr C. M. Cherian, Fr Subash Anand and Fr R. J Raja present excellent arguments pro and con. Their letters make for fascinating reading!

Personally — and I speak for other sisters also — I feel some of the psalms we now have would be more suitable for study and discussion periods in community. The psalms of violence, revenge, vindictiveness and retaliation seem out of place today For prayer three or four times daily, we need psalms of love, forgiveness, reconciliation and confidence in a Father whom we know to be a loving and tolerant "Hound of Heaven", seeking the lost rebels, not putting them in chains. In prayer we are striving for closer union with God Already we see so much of violence and intrigue and insecurity in our daily papers

Religious and lay people, I am sure, would be happy to express their preferences for the psalms that make for peace and love of God and neighbour, even enemies. Why not seek a consensus of opinion and make every one happy?

Mother House,
Krishnagar (W B) 741101

Sr Frances H. Esper, S.M I.

Dear Editor,

To help your readers help them to pray! Since half of our daily prayer consists of psalms it is not superfluous to come back once more to the ideas of Fr C. M Cherian (Nov 1983, pp 470ff) and of Fr Subash Anand (June-July 1984, pp 270ff) S A has touched on a very, very delicate problem one that affects my daily life I am astonished that not more people have reacted.

Of late I compared a famous translation by H O of 50 *selected* psalms with my private collection of 86 *favourite* psalms (copied in a diary prayer book) And, lo and behold, all the 50 psalms are in my 86-psalm collection except five Pss 24, 149, 150 (Hebrew numberings throughout) which are not very inspiring; Ps 68 a supplication psalm, with much complaining and malediction, and Ps 104, the long history of the Hebrews.

Fr Subash's "non-objectionable" psalms agree pretty well with the 50 of H.O So S A. would "save" 60, H O 50, I 86 I am not much concerned with the scholarly side of the question I just want to know *practically* how to pray the psalms.

(1) The supplication psalms, an impressive one third of the whole, can easily be prayed with the exploited and downtrodden masses (Tamil refugees, S African blacks, Harijans. .) To pray them against *my* personal enemies? No! Even if prayed in solidarity, they are a rather heavy and monotonous diet.

(2) As to the nationalistic, "tribal", chauvinistic, racialist psalms, how to pray them in a meaningful way? By *eisegesis*? Worse?

(3) Other psalms, promising earthly favours for good behaviour or speaking of death as the final disaster — how can we adapt them?

Blessed is the man who can say with C M C., "Through *each* (emphasis mine) psalm Christ shows us the ideal of Godlikeness and Christlikeness to which he is calling us" (p 475) And twice blessed is he who finds devotion in "breaking (enemies) in pieces like a clay-pot" (Ps 2), "piercing the heart of the enemies with arrows" (Ps 45), so that "they lie flat in the dust" (Ps 72). To boot, these are messianic psalms!

"Christ gives us the Psalms. Except for him we would not be having the Psalms as part of our Scripture. And we need to remember that he himself is the chief Speaker and Teacher in the Psalms" (p. 475). Many will reply: "this is a hard saying !"

By not speaking about the problem it will not go away. Such a course will in the long run have disastrous consequences for the spiritual life of some young priests who have no use for the breviary. So the golden words of the editor of VIDYAJYOTI remain a challenge: "The question has often been asked and the fear expressed that the Psalms are outmoded, some even harmful in so far as they entertain unchristian feelings towards enemies" (Nov. 1983, p. 469). The Church saw the problem and left out whole psalms or part of them.

I conclude, how to pray *all* the psalms and not just 86 of them ?

Fr DIN RAHT

Fr CHERIAN replies:

I have seen the letters by Sr Esper and Fr Din Raht My letter (VIDYAJYOTI, Feb. 1985, pp. 91f) referred to what I consider the root-cause of the problem. I must come back to this point, though it sounds unpleasant· Catholics in general, both the clergy and the laity, are without a comprehensive grasp of the whole Bible. This is not justified on the part of the educated among the faithful; it is they who must guide the rest The Bible is *the* treasured document of the community. The right thing is that one should be acquainted with the sacred writings from childhood. When interpreted through one's self-commitment to Christ, they make the faithful wise, and bring them to the experience of salvation (see 2 Tim 3:14f, Gk text). Sound interpretation requires adequate knowledge.

I cite a good modern biblical scholar in support of the above view· "In modern times the difficulties in using the psalms have come more into prominence. This may owe something to a more prosaic mentality, something also to a loss of the biblical frame of thought. Detached from the organic body of sacred tradition, the psalms are easily misinterpreted. Fortunately modern criticism is now more sensitive to the thought-world of the psalmists and to the living organism of the tradition. A thoroughly critical enquiry has therefore come to seem the friend and not the foe of a sympathetic religious appreciation..." (J H Eaton, *Psalms*, 1967, p. 28). This author points out how, in the authentic early Christian tradition, the psalms were experienced by the faithful as "a means for mankind to join with that mysterious work of cosmic praise and prayer which makes for the redemption of all things". He cites St Athanasius "If you meditate on these things and study the psalms, you shall be able, under the guidance of the Spirit, to grasp their meaning."

I am afraid Sr Esper is thinking in terms of the peace and security of her convent-world. The psalmists are much more realistic in their assessment of our real world which is characterised by a tremendous, possibly earth-shattering, conflict between the powers of good and evil They are not only aware of this conflict; they are fully caught up into it, and they are invariably on the side of the powers of good Hence they are perfectly justified in bringing this crucial problem to God in prayer (see Ps 104: 35). It is a pity that modern faithful can abstract from this dimension of their life in our world.

The psalmists are never self-centred, but always God-centred and community-centred. They are worrying about those in the community who think nothing of violating God's law of love: see Ps 119· 53.136.139. Their concern is about godless unsocial elements who are bent on hurting the community. Hence to speak of "psalms of violence, revenge, vindictiveness and retaliation" shows serious misunderstanding. Referring to the OT scriptures, Peter points out that the sacred authors, moved by the Holy Spirit, spoke not from their own narrow selves, but from the Holy Spirit (2 Pet 1: 21). Without this fundamental presupposition there could be no Scriptures.

That is why unenlightened nationalism, tribalism, chauvinism and racialism are necessarily excluded from the real meaning of the psalmists (against Fr Din Raht). They are surely authentic men of God, and therefore not fanatics. Those who are genuinely committed to the one true God are necessarily *for* all people, and not against

(*Continued on p. 236*)

Book Reviews

Gandhian Thought

Gandhi's Religious Thought. By Margaret CHATTERJEE. (Library of Philosophy and Religion, ed. by John Hick) *London, The Macmillan Press Ltd.*, 1983. Pp. xiv-194. No price indicated.

The author presents a comprehensive picture of the rich and complex personality of Gandhi. He himself found it impossible to consider his manifold involvements and concerns as separate compartments: "My life is one indivisible whole, and all my activities run into one another, and they have their rise in my insatiable love for mankind" (164). "The greatness of a man lies in his ability to harmonize what he has to do (*dharma*) with the quest for the ultimate" (165). The author does not intend to present Gandhi's spiritual thought by means of an "analytic conceptual approach" She aims at "identifying essential structures of thought as they are realized in his life with a sense of the context, a sense of history" (174). The book is an attempt to retrace this unique personality, developed in the challenging situations of life, in the constant awareness of the surrounding reality and the response to it In these changing situations, however, Gandhi always remains totally himself, becomes himself more and more and acquires a comprehensive vision which comprises God and the world, his life and the people Referring to the Hanuman myth he said "Hanuman tore open his heart and showed that there was nothing there but *Rāmanāma* I have not the power of Hanuman to tear open my heart, but if any of you feel inclined to do so, I assure you you will find nothing there but love for Rāma whom I see face to face in the starving millions of India" (17).

Gandhi's religious thought is presented throughout the book in the context of the Indian tradition which he interprets in his own manner It has its origin in his family where he imbibed the Vaishnava tradition of Gujarat, complemented by strong Jain influences. Muslims also had an impact on his early growth. A special chapter is devoted to the impact of Christianity on Gandhi, which started with his traumatic encounter with fanatical fundamentalists These early impressions were redeemed later through his association with the Quakers in London, the encounter with many Christian friends in South Africa and India, notably Charles Andrews, and also through his correspondence with Tolstoy

His religious thinking, however, was not an eclectic combination of various creeds It flows from an intuition which developed through his involvement in social and political causes His key concept is Truth He has a keen awareness of the Transcendent, but it never carried him away from actual reality, from human life. He found God in the pervading order of the universe and human society A significant shift of language can be observed during his time in London from "God is Truth" to "Truth is God" (58) The change took place when he came into contact with committed people who were professed atheists. For him, Truth is the Absolute to which we are committed, the ultimate order and meaning of things. Truth demands that we recognise and respect facts Throughout his life he insisted on accurate fact-finding before embarking on any campaign Truth, however, implies also our response to facts, the right attitude to be taken. Thus Truth must be realized within us and must determine our decisions. It comprises all spheres of life· food, work, the surrounding world — Gandhi has much to say about ecology — but mostly human society His entire life is devoted to finding the Truth and realizing it. This search demands strict self-discipline. His fasts are, in his own words, "the logical outcome of a prayerful search after Truth, a process of self-purification, which generates a silent unseen force which may pervade all mankind" (71).

In the search for Truth, suffering receives a new meaning for Gandhi. He takes up the ancient Indian tradition that the world is bound by suffering, and seeks liberation. For him suffering

is not simply a cosmic law that binds us; it is deeply related to human attitudes. Violence is the source of suffering and must be overcome. It cannot be defeated by violence, which would only add to the evil, but by freely accepted suffering. Such acceptance is for him the very opposite of cowardly submission. Suffering means the supreme courage to stand for Truth in confidence of its final victory, and in the trust that it will also move and change the hearts of our fellow people He uses Christian symbols for this experience which he translates from the past into the present· "God did not bear the cross only 1900 years ago, but he bears it today and he dies and is resurrected from day to day" (77)

Such acceptance of voluntary suffering for the sake of Truth, for the people, is possible only through love Love is the sustaining force of his life "What is worth learning from me is my love, and not my strength to give a fight My fighting strength is only a small fraction of my real life And even that strength is the outcome of Truth, my sympathy, my love All my fights and fighting spirit are worth nothing without that love" (88).

His concern with Truth, however, remains for him essentially dependent on the transcendent God. He realized how his life is totally guided by God, through the "inner voice" This came to him, as he professed, in South Africa when he started praying regularly, it accompanied him in all his struggles· "There is not a moment when I do not feel the presence of a witness whose eye misses nothing and with whom I strive to keep in tune I have found him nearer when the horizon seemed darkest" (99) This voice gave him the inner assurance which is so characteristic of him ". the struggle ceased, I was calm not the unanimous verdict of the whole world against me could shake me from the belief that what I heard was the true voice of God" (98)

In his relation to God, he is not concerned with the many names which are given to God in various religions The Jain idea of the fragmentation of all human perceptions of truth gave him the possibility to feel perfectly at home in religious pluralism. It was not merely an attitude of tolerance towards other religions, but "he was able to enrich his experience through contact with those who had different visions...He was able to feed on diverse traditions and nourish himself thereby" (121). Of special interest for us is Gandhi's relation to Christianity. Rev. J. Doke, one of his Christian friends in South Africa, sums it up: "His views are too closely allied to Christianity to be entirely Hindu, and too deeply saturated with Hinduism be to called Christian, while his sympathies are so wide and catholic that one would imagine he had reached a point where the formulae of sects are meaningless" (50). The author presents Gandhi's objections against Christianity in the perspective in which he saw them: the difference between the Jesus of history and the doctrine and life of the churches, the divine sonship of Jesus, salvation through him, and the claims of exclusiveness (42ff) More modern theology would probably be able to take away some of the edges of these conflicts

For our world, Gandhi's vision of a new society for India and for all seems most important, and connected with this vision is his understanding of salvation, moksha He is not concerned with ideologies but with actual society. He looks for "a radical re-ordering of society, a redistribution of wealth through the process of trusteeship, the bringing into being of a thoroughly decentralized socio-economic structure of society, whose health would be measured by the capacity of the humblest members to resist authority where it were abused" (161) While he frowned on conversions from one religion to another, he demanded the radical change of heart of all who wanted to strive for a better world Religion had been discredited. "Imperialist policies were practiced by countries which professed to be Christian The Hindu community which paid lip-service to the unity of all life, treated a large section of its members as untouchable Those traditions which make a big thing of brotherhood are careful to exclude from their fold those who do not subscribe to certain doctrinal tenets" (145) The change must come from people who are guided by a new vision and committed to it.

This practical approach led to the formation of small communities, in South Africa the Phoenix settlement and the Tolstoy farm, in India the Ashrams, specially the one in Ahmedabad. The Ashram was "the testing ground for those who aimed to be seekers of truth" (144). Members were bound by strict vows. Truth, non-violence, celibacy, control of the palate, non-stealing (all superfluous possessions are considered thefts), non-possession, swadeshi, fearlessness, elimination of untouchability

(69). An Ashram was "a pioneering community, not an utopian one" (144).

Gandhi's campaign for the political independence of India must be seen in this wide context. He links moksha with swarāj; once more an ancient Indian symbol of ultimate freedom is translated into actual life, once more political realities are raised to spiritual heights "Government over self is the truest swarāj, it is synonymous with moksha or salvation" (158). Swarāj of the people means the sum total of the swarāj of individuals. In the end he had to realise that political independence had come, but not swarāj

The author presents all this, and much more, in this book with a deep sensitivity for the person of Gandhi, his insights and experiences She is also able to place him into the broad context of modern thinking in psychology, philosophy and sociology A detailed index makes the book useful for practical references.

J NEUNER, S J

A Gandhian Theology of Liberation By Ignatius JESUDASAN. *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books*, 1984 Pp xi-179. $ 10 95.

In this work the man and the message in Gandhi are well interpreted in current Christian categories The author's mastery of the mind of the Mahatma is amply evident throughout the work "To see religion primarily as an agent of oppression, as Marx does, or to dismiss liberation theology as a new form of atheism is to overlook the fact of Gandhi", he says in the opening chapter (p 2), and hence the book contributes considerably to bringing out the experiment of Gandhi with Truth by interpreting it in the fresh theological perspective of liberation In the process of being presented as the satyagrahi of political faith that he was, Gandhi has been analysed as one who was more Christian than many a conventional Christian (pp x, 108, 130), and also as a fine and free theologian of Christology (pp ix, 103, 107, 136) calling Christianity back to its own truth While describing the *locus theologicus* that was Gandhi, the author employs a hermeneutical reading of Gandhi's life that is very much interwoven with the history of India. He could perhaps have creatively ended the study with some praxis-oriented proposals for India today, as he has admirably done in the final chapter (pp. 129-137) in respect to Gandhi's challenge to Christianity. It would have amounted to actualising the prophetic tribute in the words of Nehru on the occasion of the Mahatma's assassination that his light would illumine India for many more years. . . (p. 107). The study would have been finer had it assessed Gandhi's religio-political attitudes and approaches more critically. The work is no doubt extremely topical and timely, as we stand in need of a paradigm for a relevant and living Indian theology of liberation.

Jerry ROSARIO, S.J.

Theology

Salvation and Liberation. In search of a Balance between Faith and Politics. By Leonardo and Clodovis BOFF, *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis/Melbourne, Dove*, 1984 Pp viii-119 $ 6.95.

The well known liberation theologian brothers address themselves to a very important and much discussed theme today the relation between faith and politics The term politics is taken here in a very general sense In the first chapter, Leonardo gives a brief presentation of the fundamentals of liberation theology At its root is a spirituality of meeting Christ in the poor Emphasis is placed on the threefold mediation by which liberation theology attempts to generate activity that will aid the poor efficaciously socio-analytical mediation, hermeneutical mediation and mediation of pastoral service These correspond to seeing, judging by faith, and action in favour of the poor A theme that runs throughout the book is that salvation is *in* liberation

In the second chapter, *Integral Liberation and Partial Liberations*, Leonardo traces the history of liberation theology in South America and points to the various accents of the one theology of liberation He studies the stand of Pope John Paul II which he describes as a move from reticence to mistrust to enthusiastic support. (I am afraid this later is slightly overdone !) He studies also at length the liberation thematic of Puebla He shows the danger inherent in the emphasis on integral liberation, the danger of de-historicizing salvation In trying to articulate the relation between salvation in Jesus and historical liberation he emphasizes the theological, the faith dimension within the historical process of liberation. To describe this relation he studies four

models which he calls Chalcedonian, Sacramental, Agapic and Anthropological. He concludes with the remark that "without coinciding totally, salvation and historical liberation nonetheless constitute the unity-in-duality of one single history" (64). In the context of faith, "our passion for God, for God's kingdom and justice, is transformed into a passion for the poor and oppressed, with whom we enter into solidarity, and with whom we identify. Then the liberation produced will be an authentic anticipation of definitive salvation and those who produce it by their effort and striving will be authentic artisans of the kingdom of God" (66)

In the last chapter Clodovis deals with *Society and the Kingdom* He choses to tackle the problem in the form of a dialogue between an activist, a parish priest and a theologian. While the dialogue form has its own merits, it does not seem here a very fortunate choice. Each speaker especially the Priest is rather a caricature The point expressed is that God acts *in* and *through* and *behind* the human, earthly agents Clodovis argues that "the order of salvation prevails at the heart of liberation, the order of liberation is wholly and entirely within the plan of salvation" (101) When he says that Jesus is our Liberator because it is he who "rouses the oppressed to demand their rights", he generalises a claim and a point of view that a Christian may rightly hold The dialogue takes up the various themes already touched upon in the previous chapters of the book

Though the authors insist on the one plan of God, which finds its expression in human history, the terms "natural" and "supernatural" still find a place in the book In spite of certain repetitions and some unhappy English renderings, and the creation of new words, the book is an important contribution to a theme much discussed in the Church today Many Christians will need to be reminded of the historical nature of God's salvation. The authors rightly show that "We can be Christians, authentically Christians only by living our faith in a liberating way"(13).

J MATTAM, S J

Paths of Liberation. A Third World Spirituality. By BAKOLE WA ILUNGA, Archbishop of Kananga. Translated from the French by Matthew J. O' Connell. *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis* 1984. Pp. viii-215. $ 12.95.

The book begins by describing the present situation in Zaire. Like in other newly independent and developing countries, people there are at a loss — there is a tension between the traditional and the modern mentalities, there is widespread selfishness, corruption and moral degradation, people are largely motivated by profit and pleasure, they become irresponsible, every one blames the other ("them"), development programmes do not go beyond the papers, and so on. The prevalent slogans in the country seem to be, "This is Zaire! Nothing works Here! What can you expect from Zaire?". The author gives a picture of deteriorating conditions in every sphere of life. He then reflects on the causes underlying this situation. He sees selfishness as the root cause. Therefore he concludes to the need of "conscientization and evangelization in depth", by which he means making the people aware of the evil working in the heart of the human person and pointing out the part each one is playing in making the situation worse

In the main part of the book the author presents solutions for true liberation based on the Bible First he gives the example of the Israelites and their experience of the Exodus Secondly, he gives the example of Jesus and his teaching about true liberation Thirdly he also reflects on the Church and the sacraments and on how in their original sense they are means of true liberation. In all these pages the author stresses the importance of life in God, the following of Christ, selfless love and service to the neighbour, the liberation of each from various forms of sin, etc He emphasizes that it is the people who have to act, and no one can act on another's behalf, not even God. If each one fulfils his or her own responsibility in one's respective place, the country will make progress towards a true liberation

The first part of the book is instructive in so far as the author reflects on the reasons behind the present deplorable situation in his country The second and third parts deal mostly with the Christian, mainly the Catholic, teaching. There is not much new here, but we do get a reflection on the Catholic teaching which contradicts many of the traditionally held (wrong) ideas about the Christian religion. Those who think that Christianity is other-worldly and without concern for the present world, those who are satisfied with ritual observances, those pious people who have

traditionally cultivated the "I-and-Jesus" spirituality devoid of any concern for the other and for whom religion is confined within the church walls, will find important lessons in these pages which teach us to bring together faith, ritual and concrete life.

The language is simple and the text divided into small sections and subsections makes for an easy reading.

Paulus KULLU, S J

Catholic Faith in a Process Perspective. By Norman PITTENGER *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis*, 1981. Pp. x-144. $ 6.95.

The "Death of God" theology in Europe was a historical expression of the inadequacy of Thomism to explain the world around us A theology deeply influenced by Existentialism had been moulding recent Christian thought Thomism was a system of thought which embraced all in its parameters from the atom right to the all-inclusive God Existentialism on the contrary does not pretend to be a comprehensive system Its scope is limited to the here-and-now.

In this context Teilhard de Chardin comes in with his evolutionary view of the human person and the world which does not exactly fit either in the Thomistic or in the Existentialist world view Process Theology offers an alternative to these two systems of thought and can take in the evolutionary world view Process Theology is an attempt to view the human person and God in a world which is in evolution, or in a world of becoming Process thought has grown very fast since the times of its chief proponent, Alfred North Whitehead

Process Theology is a field which Indians could investigate further since we too have links with a *kind* of process thought in the philosophies/theologies of the Chārvakas, the Sāmkhya thought, the Anātmavāda-Sunyavāda of the Buddhists and, in recent times, in the writings of Shri Aurobindo It remains to be seen how these systems relate to Process Theology as it exists in Europe and America

Process Theology offers a better deal for the protagonists of Liberation Theology too, since the "weeping, wailing vulnerable" God of the Old Testament (as contrasted with the "Immovable Immutable Omniscient Mover" of Thomism) fits in the process thought, where God himself is viewed within the framework of the process of becoming.

Along with his mentor, Charles Hartshorne, Norman Pittenger has been writing extensively on Process Theology for the last few years. As a theology professor well-versed in Thomism and Existentialism, he succeeds in presenting Process Theology with depth and competence. The present work is an introduction and a general treatment of Catholic Theology in Process thought The author's treatment of God's Nature, the Fact of Evil, Prayer, Christology, Church, Liberation, etc., gives the reader a chance to know some of the major thrusts of Process Theology. The chapter on *Injustice and Liberation* is a very original search, since Process thought had not treated this subject sufficiently till now.

Robert ATHICKAL, S.J

A Word in Season: Sacramental and Occasional Homilies and Meditations. By William F MAESTRI *New York, Alba House*, 1984 Pp xvi-153 £ 6 95

As Andrew Greeley says in the Foreword, the poor quality of many homilies is not because of the lack of helpful books, but the lack of a sense of professional responsibility and the time-consuming and challenging effort needed for preparation Normally, those who need to use the abundant material available are the ones who do not take the trouble

This book is a useful instrument The author provides for each subject three scriptural texts with a short introduction and a thematic homiletic presentation on the chosen subject, or a meditation These, however, are not really scriptural homilies nor scriptural reflections.

Three subject areas have been chosen a. the sacraments with normally a homily and meditation on each sacrament, including a meditation on Jesus the Sacrament of God, and on the Church the community of Jesus Christ; b. the Church's needs, within which section we find homilies or meditations on the following subjects Unity, Jewish-Christian Dialogue, World Peace, Church Leadership, Priesthood, Catechists, Mission Sunday, Reverence for all Life, on One Who Has Committed Suicide...; c. the final group are for occasional and civic needs, which include meditations on Independence Day, Labor Day, the Medical Profession, and homilies for Thanksgiving Day, Law Day and Media Day.

(*Continued on p.* 221)

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Editorial

Welcoming the Pope, The Sign of Unity

THE official announcement of the visit of the Pope to our country in February 1986 may not have surprised us. During the seven years of his ministry as Pope, John Paul II has undertaken nearly thirty international journeys to many countries of the five continents It was but natural that India which has the second largest Catholic population in Asia and the fifteenth in the world, should welcome the visit of this spiritual leader.

We cannot forget at this moment that India was, after the Holy Land, the first country outside Italy visited by a Pope in many centuries. Twenty-one years ago Paul VI ventured, for the first time in the history of the Popes, to go outside the Mediterranean basin and to meet the teeming millions of India, on the occasion of 38th International Eucharistic Congress in Bombay. That journey would become the pattern of the many Papal visits to other countries. It marked the beginning of a new form of the Papal ministry, perhaps less administrative, more personal and certainly more popular, than the ministry of the regular work at the Vatican Henceforward, it would not be merely the bishops of the world that would go to Rome, *ad limina apostolorum*, but the bishop of Rome would go around the churches, strengthening the faith of the brethren (Lk 22 32), himself being enriched by their faith (Gal 2 11 ff).

Thus the visit of Paul VI to Bombay was historic in every sense of the word. The Pope came as a believer, a pilgrim, as he himself said, to worship the Lord in the Eucharist, together with fellow believers from all over the world, but specially from India. The scope of that visit, rich in symbolism, was very specific and in a sense limited. Even so, its announcement created a great sense of expectation. It also created a fair amount of apprehension and even opposition. If these difficulties were surmounted and the visit was the success it was, this was due, on the one side, to the diplomatic skill of the Catholic leadership, specially of Cardinal V. Gracias, who was able to explain the nature

of the visit to the officials in New Delhi and to the public at large. On the other hand, and very importantly, the successful outcome of the visit must also be attributed to outstanding believers of other religions, like the late Kaka Kalelkar and others, who in their wisdom were able to quieten the fears of the few extremist and vocal fellow-religionists. We must also not forget the understanding of the then President Sri S. Radhakrishnan and the Prime Minister Sri Lal Bahadur Shastri who volunteered to go to meet the Pope in Bombay, instead of receiving him in New Delhi as it would have been the normal protocol.

The coming visit of the Pope has a very different character from that of Paul VI. The Pope has now been invited by the President of India, Sri Zail Singh, and therefore he comes as an official guest to the nation. He has also been invited by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India, which means that he will be interested in meeting as many of the varied Catholic communities of the country as possible These two aspects of the visit need not be in conflict, but they will have to be harmonized in such a way that neither eclipses the other.

The Pope a Sign of Unity in our Midst

We may express here the hope that when we receive the Bishop of Rome on our crowded streets and public maidans, we shall be able to see in him the sign or symbol of unity which the Petrine office embodies in the Church and which the Church itself is called to be in the world In a country troubled by so many tensions, at all levels, a sign and a message of unity will be welcome and may have a healing effect We have lived for months, and live still, in an atmosphere of tensions, perhaps more threatening than ever. We have tensions with many of our neighbouring countries and with many of the economic and political blocks well beyond our frontiers. Inside, the communal-religious tensions took on tragic expression in the closing months of 1984. Other tensions arise from ethnic and class oppositions Most of them have an important economic or class basis The inequality between the very rich and the mass of the poor is perhaps ultimately the greatest threat to national unity

Divisions within the church too need the healing touch of unity. The ethnic, caste and class conflicts are not absent from our community: witness the events of Bangalore yesterday, those of Orissa the day before .. There is the unresolved conflict of the rites: what could be reason for being thankful about the rich variety of Christian traditions alive among us, has become a threat to some, a source of conflict and unrest to all.

We may hope that by his very presence John Paul II will represent for us the sign and the hope of the unity which we all need if we have to cope successfully with the intensity and variety of life in our country and the bewildering nature of our pluralism. It will clearly not be possible for the Pope to offer concrete solution to our political and social problems. We have to seek them together, responsibly and patiently, day after day. But we could be encouraged by a message supporting our search for harmony and unity, so characteristic of the Indian tradition and so much the centre of concern of the Father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi, and of the first generation of our political leaders The religious depth of this search for harmony must be sought and articulated. In the fervour that the Papal visit is bound to arouse, we need to be reminded that religious conviction and commitment is not the same as fanaticism, that faith is not bigotry, that loyalty to tradition without openness and dialogue can be destructive. More than ever this needs to be said in India, and not only in India.

The Pope's Visit an Inter-Religious Event

Archbishop Simon Pimenta has announced that the Papal visit will be an inter-religious event. We recall that Pope Paul VI's visit in 1964 was already marked by a spirit of dialogue. He met the representatives of various religions, he listened attentively with obvious openness of mind and heart to their message, he left a clear impression of being a man of dialogue, and he spoke to them quoting from the B had Araṇyaka Upanishad. This spirit would find official formulation in the document *Nostra Aetate* of Vatican II eleven months later. We are happy to hear that the visit of John Paul II will also be marked with a dialogal spirit This must mean that the Church in India will seek to provide him with ample opportunity to meet believers of other faiths and people committed to other philosophies of life. In his visit to Thailand a few years ago the Pope went to pay a respectful visit to the highest Buddhist monk. There would seem to be no reason why in India the Pope could not visit some important centres of worship of other religions, as a gesture of dialogue and encounter with other living faiths of the country. The messenger of dialogue and the defender of popular religiosity could surely be impressed and enriched by the deep devotional life that is witnessed to at such places. We must not forget the importance that John Paul II gives to symbolic actions. a visit to specific religious places of other faiths, perhaps even meeting in dialogue some of their representatives in their own homes,

so to speak, would be a meaningful gesture that would speak louder than many speeches from a distance.

More important than the specific forms of organised dialogue will be the way in which the whole visit is planned. Such planning is clearly the responsibility of the host Church, of course in dialogue with the Vatican curia It is clear that any appearance of triumphalism will be avoided in the style of the visit, the places chosen for meeting the Pope, the way guests are chosen and invited. The visit will come under the close scrutiny of people and movements that may be today even more antagonistic — and stronger — than in 1964. Let us not give them a reason to interpret the visit on the pattern of the parousias of the ancient Roman emperors. The spirit of a religious leader will influence the whole visit The people of our country have great respect for gurus and spiritual masters When the great guru John Paul II visits us they will look on him as a spiritual leader who represents the spirit of Christ, our Satguru.

Encounter with the Indian People

The spirit of dialogue will be evident in the visit of the Pope if he has ample opportunity to see and meet the total Indian reality and to listen to its representatives There is so much one can learn in India ! Besides the representatives of various religions, there are the intellectuals in search of an answer to the deep problems that beset the nation from their own competencies and world views. There are the grass-root workers of various denominations that can give a witness to the anguished search of the new society by the masses of the poor There are the poor themselves, meeting whom would require much tact: it is clear that a visit to an Indian slum could not possibly have the same significance and value as a visit to a largely Catholic Latin American barrio One cannot simply copy models from different cultural situations How will it be possible for the Pope to come into contact with rural Indian and the urban poor ? Our authorities will need tact and wisdom to programme the visit.

Although this will be a direct concern of the leaders of the Church, we would hope that the laity will also be involved even at the stage of the preparation. There are so many areas where they have greater competence than clerics ! And while we are preparing a Synod on the laity, this will be the right opportunity to reduce clericalism in our Church and elicit the responsible collaboration of the laity.

A Call to Our Own Conversion

The visit and its preparation brings special spiritual responsibilities for the Indian Church. If the visit has to be effective and if we welcome the Pope as a sign of unity into our midst, the first thing we ourselves need is a conversion, a new commitment to unity without uniformity, a decision to overcome all that divides us among ourselves and from others, not by ignoring or discounting the problems that give rise to such divisions, but by tackling them firmly and promptly, one by one. We need to overcome our own inner dichotomies between the religious and the secular in our lives, between this-worldly and other-worldly values, the temporal and the eternal, faith and the search for justice We must commit ourselves to overcome the fissiparous tendencies in our own community based on rites, castes, ethnicity or language.

A personal visit of the Pope has a special character for Catholics. In a way he embodies the reality of the Catholic Church in our midst. The visit might appear frightening because of the power of the institution behind him. It can be liberating if we are able to see that the complex institution of the Catholic Church is summed up, and therefore made simple, in him who, like ourselves, is a believer, prays, seeks God, and speaks in dialogue with men and women around. In the person of the believer, the complexity of the institution becomes disarmingly simple. The expression of such simplicity would be particularly becoming in a country where forms of religious renunciation and of prayer tend towards the acme of total simplicity, but where cultic forms and organised religion also fall into the temptation of complexity and show .. When we asked a fellow believer what she expected to hear from the Pope in his visit in India, she summarised her expectation in three words — "Simplify, simplify, simplify !" Will the style of this visit proclaim this message aloud to a Church often accused of holding on to a pharisaic complexity ?

Responsibility of the Indian Church

We have said that it is the responsibility of the Indian Church to plan the visit of the Pope in such a way as to make it an experience of the Indian reality. It is enlightening to study the history of the Papal visits in other countries. The largely successful visit to Canada followed on a serious preparation wherein the Canadian Church took full responsibility for the programme, the liturgy and the style of the visit. The near fiasco of the Nicaraguan visit also followed a preparation in which the Hierarchy was unable to express and convey

to the Pope the complex social and political situation of the country and of the Church itself. Will the Indian Church want the visit of the Pope to be an experience in dialogue ? Will the elements of Indian liturgy and cultures form part of this Indian experience ? Or shall we be dictated to by foreign dignitaries and secretaries ? Will the programme be sufficiently representative of the whole Indian reality, or will the stress be sectarian and narrowly "Catholic" ?

Finally it is clearly the responsibility of the Indian Church to provide the Pope, even before he prepares his speeches and undertakes the journey to India, with a full and well digested information about the whole Indian reality. The dossier must give information about the immense services of the Church in this country in various spheres — pastoral, education, social, etc.—, and show how the possibility of gaging in these various ministries corresponds to the particular ethos of the Indian tradition that welcomes and gives freedom to all to exercise their own charisms We have no dearth of competent persons and institutions that can also provide well-prepared papers about the economic, political, social and religious reality of India. Information about the Indian economy and the direction it has taken in the present government may be of help to him to explain the values that should guide our collective life, values that the Christians derive from the life and teaching of Jesus Only a well informed Pope can give a relevant message to the country And such wholesome and balanced information can come to him only from the Indian Church.

An Opportunity and a Challenge

The Pope's visit will help to provide the Indian Church with a fresh spiritual impulse to live "the spring" of the Second Vatican Council, the Pentecostal event of this century. We cannot be satisfied with a passing wave of popular enthusiasm. The visit should lead to a committed renewal in the life and mission of the Church in the specific context of India, for the coming years. In a message to the Catholics of Holland the Pope said recently that he was coming to them "as a brother and as a friend" With joy in the spirit we welcome to our land, the cradle of great faiths, our brother and friend who is for us the sign and symbol of our unity.

IN THIS ISSUE we focus on the theme of the 1987 Synod, now before the universal Church for discussion and preparation, i e the laity. The journal offers its pages to the views and concerns of lay people.

Is Co-Responsibility Possible in Our Church?

Models of the Church and their "hidden" Obstacles

Josantony JOSEPH*

FOR quite some time now there have been a steady stream of documents or statements calling for greater lay participation in the Church. This has clearly been a direct result of the change that took place in the Church at Vatican II when the concept of "People of God" came to the forefront in ecclesiology. Yet, despite many apparently sincere attempts at getting lay people involved, I have heard many well-intentioned priests and committed lay people end up with the complaint: "Oh, the majority, the vast majority of lay people are so apathetic! With such laity how can one ever hope to have a co-responsible Church?"

In this article I would like to share some reflections on what I consider the major cause of this apathy. My work as a lay theologian teaching in various seminaries and in other programmes of the Church around the country seems to convince me more and more that the amount of co-responsibility (and therefore "involvement") that will be present in any particular local Church, or in the Church in India at large, depends primarily on the model of ecclesiology that is dominant in that particular Church *in practice*. I stress the phrase, *in practice*, because what is preached in statements/documents from the rooftops of ecclesial and religious institutions may have little relationship to the actual ecclesiology practised in the same institutions. Thus, for example, while one Jesuit (the late Fr Alfred de Souza) could boldly call for "more democratic styles of management in the Church",[1] another Jesuit of the Bombay province, while giving courses/seminars on legal and financial matters to seminarians, openly stresses that "we must make sure that the control remains with us. Lay people can be brought in to collaborate in administrative matters, but not on decision making bodies, not on policy making committees."

*Mr Josantony JOSEPH is a lay theologian teaching theology at the St Pius X College, Goregaon, Bombay

1. Alfred DE SOUZA, *Key Note Address to the CBCI*, Nagpur, 1984.

It is my hypothesis that if one could therefore test people, including bishops and priests, to find out which model of Church they accept *in practice* (and not just verbally), one could predict the kind of lay participation or co-responsibility that could be expected and would in fact be present in any given local Church. The ecclesiology test that I have created for this purpose, which is based on the idea of *three* different models, still needs much refinement, and its validity is not as yet established — at least not by research standards.

However, despite this scientific validity not being established, when I compared lay participation/co-responsibility actually present in various local Churches with the dominant model present (which model was determined either by using the test referred to, or by applying to certain significant incidents in a particular local Church the underlying assumptions of the three models), I found at least enough validity to seriously consider refining the test and trying it out on a larger scale. As a first step to this end I explore in this article the understanding of these three models, and hope for thoughtful feedback from the readers.

The Use of Models

Models function by synthesising in particularly apt ways many disparate elements that go to make up a complex reality. Moreover, a model that resonates with a community seems to take on a life of its own, for it can evoke different responses in different people. This can further the understanding of the reality being explored, even beyond the originator's own insights.[2] This also means that no one person may be able to see all the relevant aspects of each model. Obviously, then, in speaking of these three models I have not even tried to give an exhaustive description of all their aspects. All I could do, within the limitations of this article, was to take a few aspects of each model, and try to show how each aspect has an important bearing on the amount of lay participation or co-responsibility in the Church.

This spelling out of the implications of these models has increasingly strengthened my conviction that though involving lay people in decision-making is indeed a crucial element in creating a co-responsible Church,[3] *it is too simplistic to consider this the only element.* One could even imagine a situation where the laity were included in all

2. Of the three models referred to in this article, only the third model is my own. The first two are well-known models of the Church.

3. This essential element has been stressed (almost to the exclusion of others) in a number of recent documents, e.g. *The Statement of the Indian Theological Association*, 1983, *The Convention of Lay Leaders Statement*, Mangalore, 1983, the *Key Note Address* referred to above, etc.

decision-making, and yet find few lay people coming forward to create a co-responsible Church. I have heard parish priests, whom I knew were sincere, say to me: "I told them (the laity): You make the decision .. but they won't do it. They still want me to make the final decisions, to hold the reins." And yet, according to me, this would not be an unexpected response, precisely because the dominant model in that parish (and quite likely in that very priest), even though inarticulately buried in the subconscious, could be continously working to undermine every attempt at creating this co-responsible Church. Models, I am convinced, can be self-fulfilling; "they make the Church become what they suggest the Church is."[4]

Which are these three models I am referring to, and which are the aspects in each that affect co-responsibility in the Church ?

The Pyramid Model

The first model is the pre-Vatican II pyramid model. It is, however, pre-Vatican II only in theory, for I would suspect that in fact it is the model most widely subscribed to both among the clergy and the laity In this model, as is commonly known, we have the pope, bishops and clergy on top with the vast corpus of the laity at the bottom. Consequently the "Church" is always identified with the hierarchy. All this is well known, and I will not belabour the description.

Vocation However, a crucial aspect of this model is that from among this vast multitude that make up the bottom of this pyramid, a few are "raised up" to serve God Thus, for those who accept this model, the term "vocation" is applied only to those high up on the pyramid — i e those who join the priesthood (or religious life) As a result, lay people who buy in this model certainly do not see themselves as having a vital stake in making the Church a reality, for "after all I don't have a vocation" This is the model that is still preached every year when we have a *vocation week* that speaks of the great grace of having a priestly or religious vocation in the family For those who would like to believe that this understanding of vocation has long been forgotten, at least in the official Catholic Church, it might be interesting to know that when the National Vocation Service Centre at its last annual meeting[5] wanted to widen its scope to include the fostering of all

4 Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church*, Garden City, N Y., 1974, p. 18

5 I was present at this meeting and gave one of the two addresses in which I had suggested the importance of stressing the vocations of the laity and soft-pedalling the vocations to the priesthood and religious life The NVSC itself only wanted to widen the scope of its activities to include vocations of the laity, without losing the stress on the vocations to the priesthood and religious life. It was this that the CBCI did not feel comfortable about.

vocations including that of the laity, it soon received an official communication from the secretary of the CBCI warning against such a move.

Temporal-Spiritual Dichotomy: Since "vocation" applies only to those who are high up on the pyramid, and therefore "obviously" closer to God, this model leads to a clear temporal-spiritual dichotomy, with priests being set apart for "spiritual" and the laity for "temporal" works. There are of course exceptions, in one direction only, however, so that if the "temporal" work cuts close to the personal interests of the clergy, as for example the finances of the diocese/religious institution, then the priest can and must be in charge. Official teaching that flows out of seeing the priest in this "spiritual" light is therefore consistent in insisting that harm done to a priest partakes of a double sin, the second being that of sacrilege. Many who might verbally claim not to belong to this model would yet fully accept this official conclusion. Such a view is tenable only if even among the sacraments, Holy Orders is a "first" grade sacrament, while all the rest are "second" grade sacraments. Or else there is no reason why harming one who has received the sacrament of Holy Orders is any more sacrilegious than harming one who has received the sacrament of Matrimony. Because of this clear dichotomy, since the laity's role is only temporal/secular, and the "Church" is connected in this model with "spiritual" matters, "pray tell me why I, as a lay person, must even bother about taking responsibility for the Church ?"

Theology: Consequently too, in this model, all theological training (being connected with "spiritual" matters) is given only to priests, and therefore the priest is seen as having all the answers. Thus, for example, even without any real experience of fruitful and enjoyable sexuality, priests make all the decisions regarding sexual ethics (and the laity in this model would want/expect them to do so), leading as in times past to the Holy office *condemning* the following proposition. "Marital intercourse used merely for pleasure is without fault or venial sin" which, of course, goes hand in hand with another condemnation "To eat and drink to repletion for pleasure alone is not a sin, provided health be not damaged, for we may lawfully enjoy the functions of the natural appetite."[6] Teachings like these and numerous others, coming as they do from the "spiritual" people at the top of the pyramid demand that the laity "promptly accept in Christian obedience what is decided by the pastors."[7] As a result, thinking lay people are forced to behave like children and sacrifice their personal

6. As quoted by Thomas PAZHAYAMPALLIL in *Pastoral Guide*, Vol I, Bangalore, KCJ Publications, 1984, p 88

7. VATICAN II, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* (LG), 37.

integrity for the sake of safety in the next life. Co-responsibility can hardly grow in such an environment.

Leader: Finally, in this model, there is a beautiful example of Orwellian doublespeak, because though it is universally accepted that Jesus expected the leaders of the community of his disciples to be servants to the rest, the clergy, calling themselves leaders, "humbly, serve" by ruling, so that *minister* means *magister*.[8] In this model the "Holy Childhood of the Laity"[9] is fostered, the priest is always "father," and the pope/bishops are so far above one, that one must kneel and kiss their rings. But every time such titles are used (Father, Your Lordship, etc.), and everytime such marks of subservience are allowed/encouraged, the pyramid model is subconsciously being fostered, and any amount of "sincere" calls for a co-responsible Church will probably make little headway against this radically opposing subconscious message

Does this mean that in this model there will be no lay participation ? Certainly not. One will be able to point to a tremendous amount of lay Catholic action, but only when "father" is a dynamic "good" priest who can evoke a lot of personal commitment to himself. But if "father" gets transferred and a new priest arrives who cannot foster this personal commitment, this lay participation will fall off. If, however, "father" is seen as an *apostate* (because he is bringing a new-fangled theology as opposed to the "faith of the ages") then there would still be a tremendous amount of lay Catholic action under the guidance of other "faithful" priests.[10] Of course, whenever such lay participation is present it will never be along the lines of co-responsibility, but in the hallowed tradition of Pius XI according to whom Catholic Action involved the "participation of the laity in the apostolate of the Church's hierarchy."

The Concentric Circles Model

The second model, also well known, was in a sense officially patronised by Vatican II The visual model of concentric circles sees the basis of everything as the People of God, and so the pope, like the lay person, is first of all one of the faithful From within this community certain of the faithful are called to the priestly ministry. This

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8 This is a slight variant of R PANIKKAR's phrase "minister becomes magister" as found in *Conclusions of the Asian Colloquium on Ministries in the Church*, FABC Papers no 3, Hong Kong, 1977, which include a paper presented by R Panikkar

9 I have borrowed this expression from Fr J FELIU, S J.

10. This is the response that one can see reflected in journals like *The Laity*, edited and published by V. J. F KULANDAY.

model accepts firstly that the Church will not be able to fulfil its mission to the world unless the entire people of God is mobilised, and secondly that the priestly ministry needs to be essentially linked and grounded within the flesh and blood struggle of the community. In this model, therefore, the laity too have a vocation.

Vocation: However, as Jesus is the absolute centre of these concentric circles, and since the clergy are close to the centre, it is clearly understood that the priestly vocation is higher than all other vocations Thus the decree on *Priestly Training* of Vatican II clearly refers only to the priestly vocation as a "divine" vocation, and at various other places in other decrees the Council sings the praise of this the most exalted of vocations, of which the bishop has the fulness, and the deacon partakes at a "lower" level [11] This immediately has repercussions on the possibility of a co-responsible Church Since the vocation of the laity is even lower than that of the deacon, the laity do not see themselves as having to give priority to making the Church a reality To the lay person in this model, this responsiblity is most obviously the priority only for the clergy, while the lay person's responsibility is limited to helping out as much as possible Co-responsibility, is, therefore, neither an ideal, nor a right that the laity can or even will want to demand/accept

Temporal-Spiritual Dichotomy: Because, however, all have vocations, the temporal-spiritual dichotomy is in some ways lessened in this model The laity can be "appointed by the hierarchy to some ecclesiastical offices with a view to a spiritual end,"[12] and "those in Holy Orders may sometimes be engaged in secular activities or even a secular profession "[13] But in many other ways there is a constant reminder of this basic dichotomy, lest this blurring of the edges leads to an identity crisis, and so the previous quote goes on to say " yet by reason of their particular vocation they are principally and expressly ordained to the sacred ministry " Therefore, priests will be constantly warned not to get embroiled in "temporal" affairs like politics, and the laity urged to make their weight felt in the temporal affairs of the Church, like finance committees

The concept of the sacredness/spiritualness of the priest is further embedded in the subconscious of those in this model by the constant

11 The reference to the deacon being "lower" is clear in LG 29, which also has the interesting phrase that the deacon is called "not unto the priesthood but to a ministry of service" By implication this seems to say that the priest is not called to service

12 LG 33.

13 LG 31.

reference to the superiority of virginity/celibacy. Trent had pronounced: "If anyone declare ... that it is not better and more blessed to remain in virginity or in celibacy, than to be united in marriage, let him be anathema."[14] And Vatican II chimes in by saying to seminarians: "Let them perceive as well the superiority of virginity consecrated to Christ."[15] Or again: "Towering among these counsels is that precious gift of divine grace given to some by the Father to devote themselves to God alone more easily and with an undivided heart in virginity or celibacy."[16]

As a result of all this, the laity, in this model, perceive that the very life-style of the priest is more spiritual, superior, and more capable of complete dedication to God alone. Therefore, not only is it not possible, but is it not childishly presumptuous to even want a co-responsible Church in which clergy and laity have equal parts? Is it not obvious that those who are more completely dedicated to God, who are living a superior life from a spiritual perspective, should be the ones who run the Church ?

Theology: What about the realm of theology ? Here again there is a tempering down of the priest's vaunted omniscience The clergy in this model openly acknowledge that they do not have all the answers, and will, in fact, consult lay people before advising in areas such as marriage, sexuality, medical matters, etc. Some might even daringly go so far as to encourage lay people to decide according to their own formed conscience. However, in this model, the official theology of the Church — though obviously flowing out of a clerical perspective which at the very least is the perspective of a male celibate who holds power in a non-equal Church — is foisted on all under the guise of an *objective* and *perennially valid* theology. Also, when there are theology courses for the laity, "please make sure not to trouble their faith . they don't need to be exposed to the troublesome questions that we unfortunately have in every area of theology just give them the safe and objective theology of the Church which is enough for them to live their vocation." This leads the intelligent lay person to shy away from an area where one cannot pursue truth wherever it leads. And since therefore he/she does not become well-versed in theology, it is obvious that he/she cannot be given full and equal responsibility in the Church. So the lay person feeling totally incompetent in such areas would not even want to be part of a co-responsible Church.

14. DENZ.-SCH 1810. Cf. NEUNER-DUPUIS, 1817.
15. LG 42.
16. *Decree on Priestly Formation*, 10.

Leader: For all these reasons, though they do feel somewhat responsible, lay people in this model do not see themselves as being equally responsible to make the Kingdom a reality. Therefore this model fosters the Holy *Adolescence* of the Laity, and a "good" priest will function as an open parent who sensibly consults his teenagers before making any family decisions. It is however clearly accepted by all that "father" being wiser and in this case also more spiritual, is the best person to make the final decision. This is the model of "benevolent paternalism"[17] that Vatican II encouraged as opposed to the earlier authoritarianism. As a result, Catholic organisations will always have a member of the clergy in charge even if there are lay people who are better qualified. The principal of a Catholic school will almost inevitably be a priest/religious, even if one of the lay teachers is by far the best qualified. Or Caritas India will have a bishop and priest in charge neither of whom has any social work credential The Catholic Hospital Association of India will have a priest in charge who has no medical training But the clearest example of this is to be seen in the CBCI Commission for the Laity and the Pontifical Commission of the Laity which are so structured that in the former no lay person is a member (they are only consultors), and in the latter no lay person is a member of that central committee which alone has the right to call for a meeting Still another example would be the Marriage Encounter where, though married people are heavily involved, the spiritual director is always a priest who is obviously not married So, too, none of the marriage tribunals in India has a single married member. In this model no one would consider this absence in marriage tribunals a serious lapse, or consider sponsoring married people for any required training so that they can be members of these tribunals (while of course every year numerous priests will be sent abroad for further theological training), but all would be aghast if a married person was made Rector of a seminary or religious house.

Almost everything that has been said about the second model would also apply, often to a greater degree, to the first model, But what is very clear in both these models is that the priestly vocation is clearly understood in both cases as a call from God directly to the person concerned This vocation has only to be discerned and ratified by the Hierarchy The community of the faithful has no say in this matter, and the question at the ordination service whether anyone has any objection to the particular person being ordained has only a rhetorical value, and is certainly not meant to be taken seriously.

17 Avery DULLES' phrase, as quoted by Fr Alfred DE SOUZA, in the *Key Note Address to the CBCI*, Nagpur 1984

And if the community's role is not meant to be taken seriously before the person is ordained, it is certainly not going to be taken at all once the person is already ordained. Thus it is clear that "though the Church has many forms of social control to prevent deviant behaviour among priests, lay people are never permitted the right to decide whether officials (priests or bishops) are deviant or lack charisma. Until the Church (*sic*) declares a priest deviant and replaces him, lay people are required to accept and obey him as a legitimate leader regardless of the quality of leadership shown by him."[18] The priesthood in both these models is also for life and the clergy in general are never accountable to the laity.

What kind of participation can we expect of lay people in this model ? Since in this model "all are equal, but some are more equal than others," we can predict an enthusiasm which might be sustained to some degree even in opposition to "father". However, if in a particular local Church the laity repeatedly clashes and loses against a hard-headed priest, the chances are that this enthusiasm will finally give out and end in apathy or even anticlericalism unless there is a way of going to a more receptive higher authority who can overrule the local "father". But as for co-responsibility, nobody really wants it, though "father" would be happy if the laity took over some of his less "spiritual" tasks, and the laity feel they have fulfilled their function if they live good "temporal" lives and have helped "father" out in some Church activities.

The Inverted Crown or Multiple Funnel Model

I come now to the third model which involves concepts that many are talking about in the theological world, and which in fact is being attempted to varying degrees in various local Churches around the world. The "picture" that I offer to describe this model is a means to better understand a concept of the Church within which co-responsibility can be fostered. I call this model by two names even though the visual is the same, because each of the names offers insights which are valuable. While it is obvious why I call it *inverted crown*, I also call it multiple funnel because it looks like a funnel with multiple spouts It must especially be noted that the ends of the spouts are not sealed by open to let "water" flow through.

18. Alfred de Souza, *ibid.*

This model does include the concepts of the inverted pyramid model, but goes, I believe, much further in its ability to evoke, and does not partake of that "closedness" and staticity that seems inherent in the picture of an inverted pyramid.

In this model the community, the people of God, the Church, swirl in the top part of the funnel, and those who are called to function as leaders move to the lowermost parts, i.e. to the bottommost ends of the various spouts, thus functioning as slaves, the least, the last. Yet these slave-leaders, by virtue of their position in the funnel, have the ministry of focussing the energies of all those in the funnel as all valiantly strive to "water" the earth so that the Kingdom, that ultimately finds its origin in that God who sows the seed, may sprout into flower. This concept of the slave leader is very much part of the Jesus-tradition. Leadership, at least as Jesus understood it, was meant to turn the normal understanding on its head, to invert the crown, as it were. The leader is very clearly called to be slave, and this is insisted upon not only by the powerfully symbolic "washing of the feet," but at least six other times in the four Gospels The crown is no more a sign of glory, but needs to be inverted so that it often functions as a crown of thorns because the leader must often lay down his/her life for the others.

Coming back to the model, it is obvious that to coax the divinely sowed seed to life, much else is needed besides water. Therefore each spout while drawing on different charisms of the people of God, focusses these on to the varying soil This obviously means that there will be different leaders with different charisms manning the various spouts, or in other words fulfilling different ministries . yet all are of equal importance. Each local community will also be able to decide which are the ministries/spouts that it needs. This again is part and parcel of the Christian tradition as for example when Paul reminds the Corinthians that we all are like different parts of Christ's, body, each called to fulfil a different function, a different charism, and all to be used to build up the body that is the community It is also a most obvious human dictum for the optimum functioning of any human group in our pluriform world that no one person could function as sole leader in every aspect of the life of the group.

In this model there is also no temporal-spiritual dichotomy that finds its basis in the *type* of work/ministry one is involved in. The fact that "defiled" manure comes out of one spout, and "pure" water out of another does not make one a temporal/secular and the other a spiritual ministry/charism What matters is whether the water is truly water, or mixed with some poisonous chemicals, and whether the

[illegible] the end. There is a temporal-spiritual dichotomy, but it is a dichotomy within oneself, so that it is not *what* ministry one is involved in that decides whether it is "spiritual" (or directly helping towards the building of the Kingdom of God), but *how* one fulfils that ministry, how one's ministry is inspired by the spirit of Jesus. In fact, for a Christian, how can there be any other kind of valid temporal-spiritual dichotomy ? The Last Judgement parable, for instance, clearly judges whether one is to be saved purely by reference to "temporal/secular" matters. Jesus, both in the synagogue when he was given the holy book to read,[19] and in response to John the Baptist's disciples,[20] clearly indicated that his ministry is primarily to overcome the sufferings of people. While, of course, this includes what the other two models would call "spiritual" Jesus himself refers primarily to "secular" matters. In fact a "spiritual" person by the criterion of the first two models, one who has thrown out demons in his name,[21] would not be eligible to enter the Kingdom of God if he/she was not involved in overcoming "temporal" suffering. This, Jesus repeatedly taught, was and is the will of the Father.

In this model, therefore, the Vatican II concept of the Church as "People of God" is taken to its logical conclusion. Everybody has a "spiritual" vocation in that all are challenged to be fully involved in the "temporal" task of making God's Kingdom come. But the community calls on some to fulfil the onerous and challenging task of focussing the energies of the community in various spheres. Thus while all have charisms and all are called to exercise them for the building up of the community, there are some who exercise their charisms on a more stable basis and in response to the community's call.[22] Such people are known as *ministers*.

Who then is a priest in this model ? Among these various ministries conferred by the community, there is one of *unifying and building up the community*. The one called to this ministry would already have this as his/her charism (and therefore it would truly be a call from God), but would exercise this charism on a stable basis because of the community's call (therefore ministry). The Federation of Asian Bishops says this of the role of the *presbyter*, which is the

19. Lk 4: 16ff.
20. Lk 7: 18ff.
21. Mt 7: 22-23.
22. The FABC Colloquium on Ministries in the Church in 1977 distinguished between services and ministries, by stating that a ministry is a service exercised on a stable basis and acknowledged by the community. A service, of course, would be the outflow of a charism being used for the community.

specific name for this minister: "The role of the presbyter is to [illegible], to encourage, to foster initiatives and to help charisms to develop. His one concern is to form his community into a living sign of the presence in the world of the Risen Lord who assumes and heals all human situations and brings to fulfilment all hopes and aspirations."[23]

As can be easily seen, this is no more (or less) spiritual than any focussing the energies of the community in the area of social work, politics, finance, etc. It is just a specific leadership function in a specific area. And since this person's minstry is precisely one of uniting and building up the community, he/she is also entrusted with the obligation, and therefore the right, to preside at the Eucharist, which at its deepest is a call to each Christian to break one's body, shed one's blood for the sake of establishing the Kingdom for all. The Eucharist being therefore the best symbol and most powerful means to unite and build up this Christian community, it is obvious that it should be presided over by the minister who is empowered by the community to "unify and build" it up.

In this sense I agree with the call to priests to fulfil their own particular ministry, and not to interfere with other ministries in the Church for which others are empowered But this is not to say that the various spheres in which priest today are actually involved are not spiritual, or are not ministries whether they be in the sphere of politics, social work, or theology, etc etc All I am saying is that the right name should be given. Somebody actually involved in the ministry of teaching theology, for instance, should be perhaps known as a "theological minister," and not as "priest", since he/she does not fulfil the latter's ministry of being a unifying spiritual leader.[24] This should not be too troublesome to understand. Suppose every ministry in the Church was called a "music ministry" and the majority of those ordained for the music ministry were in fact involved in other ministries, I would not say that they should not continue to be involved in these other ministries. They most certainly should, but it seems to be a ridiculous situation that all ministers whatever their actual ministries have to be ordained and named "music ministers," or that "music ministers" are higher than other ministers, etc. etc.

It is clear that in this model leadership is only functionally and not ontologically different. Here all are equally adults, though de-

23. From the *Conclusions of the Asian Colloquium on Ministries*.
24. The phrase "unifying spiritual leader" as a definition of the "heart of the priesthood" is again an FABC statement from the *Conclusions* (see note 8).

[illegible] remaining ultimately with the whole Church may, for practical purposes, be delegated to emerging and acknowledged leaders. But, and this is crucially important, this power is not only delegated in different spheres to different people, but is always revocable because it is always held only in trust for the entire community. Thus a leader who functions at the bottom of the spout in the upside-down funnel could end up blocking the community's energies, instead of focussing its energies constructively. In such a case this "leader" needs to be removed whatever his/her ministry, be it that of priest, social worker, whatever. Priesthood (or any other leadership position) here *is* still for life — but *life* is understood as the Christian life of the community, and not the physical existence of the individual concerned.

This truly ecclesial concept of the priesthood or of any ministry is one firmly established in the tradition of the Church. A priest is often ordained now in order to celebrate the Eucharist; in the early Church "the community called him as leader to build up the community, and for this reason he was also the obvious person to preside at the Eucharist."[25] Commenting on Canon 6 of Chalcedon, Prof. Schillebeeckx writes: "What theological view of ministry is presupposed here ? Fundamentally this: only someone who has been called by a particular community to be its pastor and leader may receive ordination An absolute ordination, i.e. laying hands on anyone without his being asked by a particular community to be its pastor is null and of no worth," And again: "Another fundamental consequence of the canon of Chalcedon was that a minister who for any reason ceased to be the president of a community, *ipso facto* returned to being a lay person in the full sense of the word." Thus "the sacramentality of leadership must be located in the sacramentality of the Assembly as such. From this perspective, the priest is *alter Christus* because of who he is within the community, not in terms of authority or sacramental or jurisdictional empowerment."

This model of the inverted crown also expresses forcefully the inherent danger in the Church, for everyone "knows" that it is not logical for a crown to be placed in this way. And so whenever the leaders get corrupted by the power that is entrusted to them, they quickly turn the crown 'right side up', and exercise leadership in ways that are surely anti-Jesus. Of course, like the Grand Inquisitor,[26] they always justify themselves claiming that what they do is for the good of the people.

25. This and the next three quotations are from Edward SCHILLEBEECKX, *Minister? Pastor? Prophet?*

26. In the novel *The Brothers Karamazov*, by F. M. DOSTOEVSKY.

The multiple funnel model is also an open model ... [illegible] wherever it comes from, whether from other religions or from the sciences or anywhere else. Therefore, in this model, truth can be pursued wherever it leads, and the tradition of the Church, yes even the Scriptures, become a guide and not a straitjacket for the theological enterprise. Theology, unlike in the previous two models where it is basically a defence of orthodoxy, is here a creative affair of offering proposals to the community, with the community having the right and duty to judge between what is life-giving and what is death-inflicting. The community, the Church, will never be so presumptuous as to claim that in fulfilling its judging function it has always been kept in truth, in the sense that it has never made mistakes. History would not allow such a dishonest claim, not even in the realm of faith and morals. However, if being "kept in truth" is understood in the same dynamic sense as the expression that a couple is "kept in love" — and this involves fights, mistakes, failures, etc. — then this community can claim to be "kept in truth" . . that is the community is somehow always moving towards the truth, as the couple is moving towards greater love. In the process the community can make and acknowledge its mistakes, so that, stumbling and groaning and mis-stepping, the pilgrim community somehow lives in God's mercy and seems to be moving on in the figure of a dance.

Unlike the other two models which tend to suggest the idea that Christians are essentially closer to the truth than others, the Church in this model does not need to be better than others to be assured of its own worth. It therefore prescinds from comparing itself with other pilgrim groups (other "multiple funnels" which all claim to be working towards God's Kingdom), but assures those within its own ambit that at least this Church is part of the whole process of bringing about the Kingdom of God Thus this model would prefer to refer to the Church with the new Code of Canon Law's "Christifideles" ("Christ's faithful") rather than Vatican II's more presumptuous "People of God" — for the latter seems to appropriate a title to itself that could more rightly be used of the whole human race

This model, in my eyes, is the only one of the three that can truly foster a co-responsible Church. It is definitely true that an inverted crown is in a state of unstable equilibrium, but this model can boldly say with the Indian Theological Association: "The traditional structures and institutions that gave the Church a certain stability and strength in the past have become today its problems. Since its structures are not absolute but relative to its mission, we must have the

courage to discard those clearly irrelevant and even harmful, and look for those contextual and functional."[27]

Conclusion

Is this third model practical ? My answer to this involves back-tracking a bit. I have suggested earlier that the underlying understandings of a model can become so accepted that they enter even the subconscious. At this stage the basic understandings behind the model experience a kind of divinisation so that even to challenge these understandings within the secret recesses of one's heart, becomes sacrilegious or sinful.

In such a situation where we are robbed of the power/courage to think an alternative thought, it is the task of the theologian to play the prophet.[28] He/she must first of all be able to show the people "that there is reason for grief ..", that what they have accepted as perhaps even of divine origin for the furtherance (in this case) of the Church, is really the very thing that works for that Church's destruction. I have tried to do this in my own limited way by using two well-known theological models and by spelling out some of their inherent implications.

Secondly, the theologian as prophet must offer an alternate model — even if only an impractical one. If one begins by asking questions of practicability, one has already conceded everything to a world of security, even if such a world is death-giving. Questions of practicability are of no importance until we can first imagine an alternate model. The only condition for the model is that it must resonate with the community. However, to make this exercise in imagination a genuinely theological effort and not just an attempt at poetry, the Christian theologian must be able to show that this model has its roots in the Christian tradition. I have, again in a very limited way, tried to do this by offering a third model of my own which has in fact resonated with a number of Christian audiences around India. Whether it further resonates with others, and whether it is rooted enough in the Christian inspiration, remains to be seen and judged.

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27. *Statement of the Indian Theological Association*, 1983. Cf. VIDYAJYOTI 1984, p. 107.

28. The concept of prophet used here is based on my "Key-note Address to the V All India Biblical Meeting", Bangalore 1985, published in *Word and Worship*, April 1985, pp. 134-141, 151.

Three Meetings on the Laity

A Pastoral Review of Hong-Kong, Mangalore, Nagpur

Right Rev. Alan De Lastic*

IT is heartening to note that following the directives of the Second Vatican Council more specific efforts are being made, both at the international and national level and over the past few years, to enable the laity to fulfil their role in the life and mission of the Church. From December 1983 to March 1984, three meetings in Asia dealt with the role and mission of the laity.

The Pontifical Council for the Laity (PCL) was established by Pope Paul VI on an experimental basis by the Motu Proprio *Catholicam Christi Ecclesiam* of the 6th January 1967; ten years later his own Motu Proprio *Apostolatus Peragendi* of the 10th December 1976 gave it a definite and stable structure. The main purpose of the Council is to enable the laity to participate more effectively in the life and mission of the Church, either through recognised organisations or as individuals. According to a report of Mr K. T. Sebastian, a member of this Council:

> The plenary assemblies of the Council decided, as a priority, on a series of continental meetings with the bishops in charge of the lay apostolate in each country together with lay people from the same country. Pope John Paul II strongly supported this idea and urged that the meetings be held *in loco* rather than in Rome. So far three continental meetings were held. the first in Bogota for Latin America (1979), the second in Vienna for Europe (1981), and the third in Yaounde for Africa (1982).

The Hong Kong Meeting

At the *Hong Kong* meeting of December 2-6, 1983, fourteen countries of Asia were represented, through 120 persons, but it was sad to notice the absence of delegates from Burma, mainland China and other socialist countries.

The letter of Pope John Paul to the Conference was very inspirational and encouraging and was an excellent example of pastoral

*The Right Rev. Alan de Lastic is at present Bishop of Lucknow. At the time of writing this article he was Auxiliary Bishop of Calcutta and a member of the CBCI Commission for the Laity.

leadership. His Holiness repeated part of his message delivered at Manila on 21st February 1981: "The Church has been present in Asia from her very beginning, and you are the successors of the early Christians who spread the Gospel message of love and service throughout Asia. In many parts of this continent you are small in number but in every country the Church has taken root. In the members of the Church — in you — Christ is Asian."[1] The Holy Father stressed then the need for the laity to recognise their own vocation:

> The laity must have an awareness of the greatness of their vocation, a sense of being an essential component of the ecclesial community, a sense of living union with Christ. It means making their own the call of Leo the Great many centuries ago: "O Christian, recognize your dignity".[2]

He drew attention to the apostolate in the family and the need for encouraging vocations through the parents. He also singled out for special attention the apostolate of the Christian worker, the evangelisation of the cultures of Asia and the need for "contact and dialogue" with the great religions which lend a specific character to the Asian continent. The laity have a special role in this:

> All Christians must therefore be committed to dialogue with the believers of all religions, so that mutual understanding and collaboration may grow, so that moral values may be strengthened, so that God may be praised in all creation. In the light of what I have said regarding the vocation of the laity in the life and mission of the Church, there is one point that I would wish to emphasize as you begin your discussions. To achieve all of this *it is necessary to make the adequate formation of the laity a pastoral priority* in each of the local Churches.[3]

The opening address was delivered by the President of the PLC, Cardinal Opilio Rossi, after which a position paper was presented by Archbishop Paul J. Cordes, the Vice President, on "Shared Responsibilities" in the Church. After reviewing the growth of the lay apostolate in the other continents, the Archbishop outlined the origin of this sharing of responsibility in the early Church, especially portrayed in the letters of St Paul. First, the terminology of the Apostle stresses the variety of gifts given to the community of the faithful bound together by the Holy Spirit — there are the gifts of the services (*diakoniai*) and the fruits of the gift of love lived by God (*charismata*). Secondly, when Paul mentions the various "services" he does not place any value on the difference made between them by the Corinthians, but uses them all equally, without making distinctions. It is the Spirit who manifests himself through the gifts and charisms, it is He who grants them, allots them (1 Cor 12-7). They are to be related to Christ (12:4.5). The Archbishop stated that, according to the Apostle,

1. Cf. *AAS* 73 (1981), p. 396.
2. *AAS* 76 (1984), p. 271.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 272-3. The stress is found in the original.

[illegible] in the community has an essential [illegible] [illegible] Trinitarian. No Church service can be performed [illegible] the fact that it is rooted in God. We ought to emphasise [illegible] very strongly today, at a time in which certain aspects of [illegible] are constantly being placed to the fore in pastoral work.

Thirdly, there was already need in the early Church for Order in the Church's services, as God is not a God of confusion but of peace (1 Cor 14:33). How is this order brought about ? For Paul the members of the community who have received gifts of the Spirit find a principle of order in the Apostolic tradition and government and hence in the ordained ministry. ... Even though the ordained ministers have a decisive authority for the governance of the Church, this in no way gives them a kind of absolute lordship over the Church. Brotherly love is, and remains, the ultimate norm even in the application of the ecclesial order. Finally, the Pauline letters stress unity in diversity in the use of these gifts for the building up of the Kingdom of God. A proper understanding of these gifts, a harmonious and organised deployment will be conducive to the proper growth of the community led by the Spirit in brotherly love. Referring to the contempory Church the Archbishop pointed out that while it was necessary to accord to the lay person his proper place in the Church, the specific character of the lay person, that which distinguishes him or her from other sections of the people of God, must not be forgotten.

> We have to recall one of the specific features of the laity's work which has too often been neglected in the post-conciliar debate: their *socio-political commitment*. The Council Fathers never thought that their deliberations were intended to transform the laity into *quasi* clerics.

On the second day of the meeting, as a member of the FABC Committee for the Laity, I was privileged to present "an overall view of the Asian context in which the Laity must fulfil their mission". The paper attempted to outline the major challenges and problems confronting the Church in Asia. It singled out for special emphasis the evangelising of the great religions and cultures of Asia which are a specific characteristic of this continent. Secondly, there is the challenge of poverty and progress faced by the developing countries.

It is a historical fact that Asia is the cradle of the great religions of the world, but Christianity has made little or no visible impact on them over the centuries, in spite of all the gallant efforts at inculturation. *One* of the reasons for this can be attributed to the lack of involvement by the laity. Evangelisation, dialogue and encounters with other religions in Asia have been undertaken by and large only by the clergy and religious. The vast bulk of the people of God have not been utilised for this immense task. The paper also brought out the need for a scientific study of the anthropology, culture, customs and

living habits of the *tribals* of Asia so that the role of the Church in promoting and preserving their spiritual and moral values becomes effective. The work of the missionaries among the tribals has resulted in the emergence and rapid growth of what the Council termed "particular churches" — new communities with their own bishops, priests, religious and lay persons united in themselves to become instruments of further evangelisation, preserving at all times an intimate communion with the universal Church. The test that the Church has been truly established, is fully alive, and is a perfect sign of Christ among men, is *the existence of a laity worthy of the name* working along with the hierarchy (AG 19-21).

The second challenge comes from the struggle of most of the Asian nations for a *more just society*. In this movement the Church has not remained a silent spectator, but has played her role, however insignificant, in "action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world". To quote a relevant passage from the paper:

> We are aware of the various movements launched by some groups in the Church in the various countries of Asia, aimed at bringing about a just society, through the transformation in the consciousness of Christians who have to live in a world that is marked by social, economic and political injustice To retain their authenticity they must be inspired throughout by evangelical love, which is the actual force that changes the lives of persons and transforms society. These efforts must follow closely the directives laid down time and again in the social doctrines of the Church. The transformation of persons and society must not remain on the socio-economic and political level only, but must eradicate the very cause of injustice which is *sin*, in its individual and collective manifestations. Full development is achieved only when the image and likeness of God in man is fully restored, and when he is once again an adopted son of the heavenly Father who sees in him the image and likeness of Christ. There is no place for hatred in this movement of evangelical love which inspires a preferential option for the poor Peace and harmony are not brought about by the conflict of opposites but by the acceptance of evangelical love in both factions

The paper also examined briefly the other realities of Asia. Many countries have adopted an extreme form of *socialism*, in which the human person and his dignity were subordinated to the needs of the State. *Military dictatorships* have assumed control by armed force in a few countries, and they make adequate provision for retaining their ill-gotten power. In spite of the Declaration of Human Rights and the efforts of the UN, *totalitarian regimes* still perpetrate glaring injustices against human dignity. Where people are fortunate enough to enjoy freedom under a system of *parliamentary democracy*, they are not given an adequate say in the affairs of the State, as policy making and the resources are controlled by a few individuals or groups. Political independence and freedom from colonial rule have given way to a crippling economic dependence on countries of the developed world. Exploitation of the cheap labour force, *degradation of women*, the neglect of *youth*, and a deep current of secularisation which erodes

moral and spiritual values are current features of Asian life. The cry of "overpopulation" has let loose a spate of abortions and every form of artificial contraception which is destroying the sanctity of marriage and the family Finally, the *arms race*, made necessary by fear, hatred and distrust of neighbouring nations, is the biggest obstacle to progress, since the disproportionate sums of money spent on weapons could have been used for human development

In this Asian context, if the lay person is to participate in the mission of the Church, he must first be adequately trained Among the many practical recommendatations proposed in the paper the following are mentioned

> A strong emphasis on the role of the lay person in the mission of the Church to be given in the general catechesis that is being carried on from day to day by our pastors and their collaborators, a deepening of the catechesis of the *family* leading to an enrichment of the Christian life within it, and a preparation for the lay apostolate in the social milieu, a right understanding of the mission of the Church, in which the specific role of each section of the People of God, bishops, priests, religious and laity is clearly defined, making available the teachings of the Council, and the popes, especially the social doctrine of the Church in a more readable form, to bridge the communication gap, updating of existing groups of the lay apostolate animating and guiding small groups of dedicated lay persons as a preparation for lay leaders, specialised training for specific areas like the evangelization of the great religions and cultures, dialogue with people of other faiths the vast world of mass media and communication, public life and leadership in the political field, participation in the movement for human development especially among the poor, undertaking the training of chaplains and competent lay persons to guide the various organisations of the lay apostolate, finally, administrators of the finances of the Church to make available adequate funds for the training of lay persons

Four sessions of the meeting were set aside for workshops which discussed the participation of youth women, workers and lay people in positions of responsibility in the life and mission of the Church in Asia Many participants found these discussions one of the most rewarding features of the meeting, though not a few were disappointed at the attempt made to present a summary of the Workshops in a consolidated report The reports were unanimous on the *necessity of formation* to enable the laity to carry out their mission in the Church and society

In the absence of any final official statement, what follows below is taken from the consolidated report and from various workshops.

Youth, those below 30 years of age, form 50% of Asia's population and need special attention The workshop recommended two approaches to formation One which has as its starting point a deep spiritual formation — bible study, prayer meetings, and a study of the Church's teachings The other approach is a process where youth are rooted in the concrete realities of family, school, church, and the environment in which they live.

The workshop report on the role of *women* described the role and status of Asian women in the Church and in society in realistic and accurate terms. The involvement of women varied according to their education and their social status and the environment. Urban women and those belonging to the upper middle and middle class participate in works of charity, social welfare and mercy They are also involved in the teaching and healing ministries of the Church The same is not true for poor women and those who live in rural areas However, in some countries the training of rural women as community leaders through exposure programmes has already been initiated The most important conclusion of the discussions was an earnest plea for an adequate formation, spiritual, theological, biblical, liturgical and catechetical at all levels for women in pastoral work The recommendations made to the Pontifical Council of the Laity were

(1) to draw up special programmes that would enable single women to become involved actively in pastoral work,

(2) to encourage and support the role of women in fostering ecumenism,

(3) to make a positive stand for the *participation* of women in the different policy-making bodies concerned with the lay apostolate,

(4) to request Catholic organisations of/for women that are more inclined to be inward looking, to extend/enlarge their outreach programme to involve more women in the grass-roots and slum areas, especially concerning themselves with Family Life Education

We recommended that all Bishops' Conferences and the laity in Asia give special attention to the problems of *migrant* women who are lured to come to different countries on false promises of jobs, and end up taking just any kind of work, finally resorting to prostitution and becoming destitutes

The group assigned to discuss the role of the *workers* examined the status of the average workers in Asia and the conditions under which they earn their living In most Asian countries the conditions under which workers live and work are appalling, whether they be in urban or rural areas, the "modern" economic sector (plantations, factories) or "traditional" sectors (peasant, agriculture, tenancy, share cropping) Women also work in degrading conditions and the scourge of child labour still plagues many countries The demands of economic and industrial development have made deep inroads into the economies of the rural population, especially the tribals, forcing them to change their original status and assume the role of "workers", compelled to work under the same dehumanizing conditions However, in this otherwise bleak description of Asian labour a few positive influences need to be mentioned, such as the social, familial and personal transformations that worker-owned co-operatives bring about, the efforts to defend, preserve and develop tribal economies so that these people may advance, yet remain independent of the oppressive wage-economy The small group formations among industrial workers offer them the opportunity to share common interests, to study and to reflect on life, and plan and execute group action to further their own welfare. Wherever the influence of the Church was

felt in its effort to uphold the dignity of the worker and defend his basic rights, the Asian worker was very receptive.

The workshop spent some time discussing the fact that the social teaching of the Church had been made more accessible to the clergy and the hierarchy in recent years, but it had not filtered down to the laity in general, still less to the worker in particular Finally, it was agreed that for the social teachings of the Church to have any practical and lasting impact, they must be experienced, and lived out in a *Christian environment*, one in which Christians truly love and relate to each other and also to the non-Christians, as brothers and sisters in Christ Among the many recommendations proposed the following deserve special mention

(1) That priority be given to developing a "*diocesan worker pastorale*" which would bring the worker into sharp focus in all pastoral activities Asia must not 'lose" the worker as industrial Europe did in the 19th century

(2) Seminarians must be trained to fully understand the worker At the very minimum this means making the social doctrines of the Church an integral part (not merely an elective) of priestly formation Further, direct experience with workers will enhance understanding of their problems and situations

(3) In the on-going spiritual formation of the laity it is imperative that the social reality be directly taken into account, and that in practice will mean an appreciation of the 'theology" of work, and the need to love our neighbour

(4) The Church ought to look seriously at supporting, or developing, alternative economic and social systems to replace the present wage-economy which has transformed a handful of persons into "owners" and hundreds of millions into "workers" The *co-operative* (where workers own the factors of production), appropriate technologies (thus freeing the Asian worker from excessive dependence on foreign sources), and existing "precapitalist" social systems amongst especially the tribal peoples which are based on *communal* use (as opposed to private ownership) of land and factors of production, are but three of several alternatives that have been shown to bring about a measure of economic freedom, which in turn enhances basic human dignity

(5) As its concrete and tangible contribution to alleviating the misery of the Asian workers the Church ought to sponsor (technical) training programmes for workers (especially youths just entering the market), provide dormitory housing facilities for newly arrived rural-urban migrants to face the challenges of an often harsh and cruel world dominated by big business and big government

Other recommendations were made regarding more participation by the workers in decision making bodies by proper representation and the establishment of worker centres manned by themselves An appeal was made for the Church to support workers movements at all levels, for Bishops and Priests to widen their understanding of the Asian worker, preferably from a practical (grass-roots) rather than intellectual level, and for the clergy to be more attentive to the cries of workers Finally, it was stated the Church should speak out courageously on workers rights and on injustices perpetrated on them.

Three workshops dealt with the role or *persons in positions* of responsibility All agreed that lay persons holding such positions where they can exercise a powerful influence have a bounden duty to bear

witness by their own lives to the values of the Kingdom of Christ, namely Truth, Justice and Sharing Love. Wherever such eminent people have lived up to their faith their leadership has a lasting effect. Because of persons of responsibility, even secular governments have appreciated the contribution of the Christian community and depended on it in times of need. However, it cannot be denied that very often these persons experience some difficulty in participating more actively in the life of the Church. A few reasons were mentioned:

(1) They do not feel "accepted" by some Church leaders, because they are seldom consulted or invited to take an active part in the Church's life Their talents are not utilised at all by authorities in the Church

(2) Some fear that they may be branded as "communal", or identified with a minority group, which could be compromising for them

(3) They are very busy and therefore do not have time

(4) A lack of deep Christian conviction makes it difficult to share the faith;

(5) Lack or organised formation given by the clergy to outstanding laymen and lay-leaders

All workers agreed that formal or specialised formation for persons in responsibility was badly lacking nearly everywhere, hence the recommendation gave top priority to this type of training, which should be based on sound theology, the doctrine of the Church, and an authentic spirituality suited to the laity A few recommendations are mentioned in detail

(1) The basic truths of our faith should be conveyed to all people who hold a position in society This can be done in various ways, e g by special courses, pamphlets, pocket books, or sermons that touch on topics vital to those people Conciliar documents and encyclicals should be presented to them in a simplified form

(2) Lay people in positions of responsibility *within the Church* should be given a chance of more active participation, especially by a more democratic way of decision making in the different consultative councils In these councils the consultation must be meaningful and effective This participation is in itself a way of formation ("learning by doing"), though special formation for members is important too

Catechists, social workers and other lay persons *employed by Church* institutions should be given special formation, motivation and consideration by upgrading their status and financial situation If there are Catholic village headmen or other influential leaders in rural areas their formation should be given special attention because the vast majority of the people of Asia live in/from agriculture

(3) Considering that the Church in Asia lives and grows together and in close contact with other big *religions* of the world, and that these religions influence the different *cultures* of Asia, lay leaders should know very well the religion(s) and culture of their environment, because this is very important for dialogue and proclamation of the Gospel Regular meetings with leaders of other religions should be arranged not only for the clergy but also for lay leaders.

(4) The formal training and formation of the laity go hand in hand with their *involvement* in the life of the Catholic community and with a deep *prayer* life.

The overall impression of the meeting at Hong Kong *was a genuine concern of the laity for their own formation* so that they could fulfil their role in the mission of the Church Consequently an appeal was made at the conclusion of the consolidated report "We ask our

Bishops and Priests to teach us how to be holy and grow in holiness, in order that we may show non-Catholic Asia how a Christian lives".

The Mangalore Meeting

On 29th December 1983 the CBCI Commission for the Laity organised a national consultation of Catholic lay leaders at *Mangalore* (i) to create in the laity an awareness of their role in the Church and in Society; (ii) to promote a better understanding of the problems of the Catholic community in various parts of India; (iii) to promote better understanding and integration amongst lay Catholics of various rites and regions, and (iv) to enable the emergence of a national lay leadership through the interaction of delegates attending the Convention.

Over 200 lay leaders from 81 dioceses and organisations of the lay apostolate took part in this meeting. One full day was set aside for listening to reports from the various regions of India and for sharing views and experiences about the present role and status of the lay person in the Church in India The first few sessions of sharing provided an opportunity for many to let off steam by criticising the established Church whose present structures concentrated complete control in the hands of the clergy and hierarchy and did not accord to the lay person the status and dignity that belong to him according to the teaching of Vatican II Some were quite vociferous and demanded an immediate and radical change in existing structures of the established Church as a precondition for the participation of the laity in the decision and policy making of the diocese The tone of the conference at this early stage was heavily in favour of a share in the administrative and financial control of Church affairs Three young representatives of youth organisations reminded the convention that the effectiveness of the lay apostolate should be based primarily on a deep spirituality, which meant a radical and personal commitment to Christ himself Interventions by other eminent lay leaders drew the attention of the house to the specific character of the lay apostolate to evangelise the social milieu, that vast area of human affairs often referred to as the socio-political field, *where the Church* as the sign and sacrament of the world's salvation *can ordinarily be present only through the lay person.* These remarks brought the necessary corrective to an unbalanced tendency of some of the lay participants to limit the aspirations of the laity exclusively to active sharing of "power" with the clergy within the structures of the Church As a result a little more attention was paid to the adequate formation of the laity to enable them to fulfil their role

in the mission of the Church. In spite of all the remarks made at the general assembly and the workshops about the lack of recognition of the dignity of the lay person in the Church in India, the participants were grateful for this opportunity of frankly airing their views and their grievances at this national convention. This attitude was reflected in the final statement:

> We deeply appreciate this unique opportunity afforded by the Commission of the Laity of the CBCI to meet and know each other better The reviewing of the work of the Church, its problems and challenges in various regions, has brought about a better understanding among us, strengthened our unity, and fostered concern for each other.

This trend of thought is also voiced in the final statement about the theology of the laity and shared responsibility with the clergy in the mission of the Church. While admitting that the laity have a definite contribution to make within the Church in her life and structures, the statement laid stress on the fact that:

> The role of the laity must not be limited to such involvement, but must particularly be directed to areas outside the institutions of the Church, such as politics, trade unions, mass media and professional life This enables the Church to become a catalytic and corrective force working towards a just society, the Kingdom of God on earth All this is not possible without *adequate Christian formation*

In the general assembly and in the workshops the participants examined critically the present state of Christian formation in catechesis, family life, women, youth and the workers While paying tribute to the efforts already made in catechesis, it was remarked that greater emphasis should be placed on the social doctrines of the Church relevant to the socio-economic and political problems of India The participants expressed a strong desire for a sound training. "We cannot expect lay persons to take up their responsiblities unless they are provided with opportunities for a basic theological formation "

The final statement called for an intensification of the Christian life of the family Women and youth should be given better representation in parish and dioccesan pastoral councils. In particular the youth "must be guided in their formation, and assisted to find suitable employment in which they can fulfil their commitment to the Church and society." The evaluation of the worker contained a similar judgement to that made in Hong Kong:

> The social teaching of the Church ... unfortunately remains practically unknown to the working class, who therefore try to have their grievances redressed through means that are sometimes not based on an adequate Christian reflection This is an area in which an authentic and urgent Christian lay ministry is required.

In conclusion the final statement called for *participative leadership* as the most effective way of sharing responsibility in the Church.

Ten practical recommendations were made, the most important, in my opinion, being the tremendous emphasis on the need for the laity to be equipped with a sound spiritual and theological training, envisaging the possibiliiy of fully trained professional lay theologians. Parish and pastoral councils, finance committees and other forums should be set up where they do not exist so that participative leadership may become a reality The Catholic Union should be strengthened at the parochial and diocesan level so that it might prove more effective as a national body. Competent lay persons should be trained to enter civic and political life. The role and status of women should be recognised and they should be given adequate representation in ecclesial bodies. A youth wing of the All India Catholic Union should be established. The role of the laity in the apostolate of the family and in mass media was also stressed Once more a recommendation was made for the Church to fight for the constitutional rights and privileges of people of Scheduled Caste origin, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes. Finally, lay persons should be trained to bring about harmony among the various communities of India, to proclaim the message of Christ and enter into dialogue with persons of other faiths.

The Nagpur Meeting

In the aftermath of these two meetings it was no mere coincidence that the CBCI plenary meeting at *Nagpur* in February 1984 chose as its theme "The Church's Response to the Challenges of Contemporary Society with Special Reference to the Role of the Laity " The position paper presented by Fr Alfred D'Souza, S.J , of the ISI, Delhi,[4] was a brilliant analysis of a contemporary Indian society vis-a-vis the role of the Church The response by Fr J Dupuis, S J , provided the theological orientation of the theme Both papers formed the basis of the discussions at the General Assembly and the workshops, which resulted in the final statement, drafted by Bishops Valerian D'Souza of Poona, Palakaparambil of Pallai and myself, ably assisted by Fathers Alfred and Dupuis Most of the credit for the production of the statement must be attributed to these two priests who placed their talents at the service of the bishops of India Their co-operation with the bishops of the Drafting Committee was an excellent example of what can be achieved for the good of the Church when bishops utilise the charisms of their "prudent collaborators in the priesthood."

4. Published in an enlarged form in the Indian Social Institute Monograph Series no 16, under the title *Church and Society. Sociological Perspectives on Lay Participation*, New Delhi, ISI, 1984

It is worth mentioning that when the first draft was presented to the general assembly not a few bishops objected that it was heavily overloaded with an emphasis on social justice in the socio-economic and political fields, while other challenges were ignored. In reply to this objection it was pointed out that the final statement was not meant to outline all the challenges and problems confronting the Church in India but to single out those which were the burning issues of the day, as a matter of pastoral priority. It was admitted that while the Church was not called upon to provide a ready-made solution to every human situation, it should at least acknowledge the existence and the urgency of such problems, and thus avoid the stance of the proverbial ostrich which buries its head in the sand in order to be oblivious of the harsh reality of the contemporary situation. Unless the actual situation confronting the Church in India today was realistically presented, it was pointless discussing the role of the laity in transforming society.

The final statement attempted to record the discussions in the general assembly and in the workshops in the light of the position papers. It began by describing the continuity of the themes discussed by the CBCI over the past ten years, during which the tragic situation of Indian society was reviewed under different aspects. Discussion of the realities of the country was not new to the CBCI, but the meeting at Nagpur concentrated on mobilising the vast bulk of the laity in India to effect the transformation of society through social justice.

Following the pastoral leadership of the Holy Father the Conference through its practical recommendations gave priority to the adequate formation of the laity to enable them to fulfil their role in the mission of the Church in the world.

The recommendations listed below are an attempt to provide the laity in India with an adequate formation which will enable them not only to participate in the life of the Church but also in its mission to be the sign and sacrament of the world's salvation.

(1) The National Centres and the Regional and Diocesan Pastoral Centres should intensify their programmes for the formation, spiritual and theological, of lay people Facilities should also be created to enable lay people to attend theology courses in seminaries and theological faculties

(2) The theological curriculum in seminaries and faculties should include the training of priests for participatory leadership and animation of lay leaders.

(3) Diocesan funds should be made available, wherever possible, for training those lay men and women who volunteer to dedicate themselves for service to the local Church

(4) Educational institutions which are spread out all over the country should manifest the Church's preferential option for the poor in admission policies and training. Teachers in those institutions should be provided with the kind of value education and religious formation which will enable them

to orient young men and women to respond to the needs of marginalised groups of society.

(5) Associations of the lay apostolate should update and renew themselves in accordance with the directives and guidelines contained in the social doctrine of the Church.

(6) The Commission for Christian Life in collaboration with the Commission for the Laity should prepare, for the three rites, a liturgical programme with readings and material for homilies centred on this theme.

(7) At the diocesan and/or regional level, social service organisations, especially of the laity, should establish links with legal aid cells in the area for jointly assisting the poor and exploited through "public litigation" (the new co-operative effort to provide social justice through the courts)

(8) The same associations should discover government schemes intended for the uplift of the weak and the exploited and assist the beneficiaries to take advantage of them

(9) Efforts by lay organisations to remove discriminatory legislation and practices against Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and the Backward Classes, and especially against Christians of Scheduled Caste origin should be supported

Reviewing the meetings at Hong Kong, Mangalore and Nagpur briefly I do not think it is a mere co-incidence that all three should take to heart the urgent plea of the Holy Father to treat the *adequate formation of the laity as a pastoral priority*. I personally believe that this is the work of the Holy Spirit, who within the short space of three months has helped the head of the Church, the bishops and the laity to arrive at this common concern after prayerful discernment.

The second common trend of thought in these meetings seemed to be a call for *attitudinal changes* in all sectors of the People of God so that the status, dignity and the role of each may be understood, appreciated and acknowledged in practice

The meetings also recognised the need for more intensive *lay participation* in the policy making of ecclesial bodies, especially the diocesan and parish pastoral councils and finance committees.

There was also an acknowledgement of the need for *bridging the communication gap* the documents of the Second Vatican Council, the recent encyclicals of the Popes, especially those concerned with the social teaching of the Church, have not yet reached the vast bulk of the laity. All the meetings also recommended the appropriate *training of the priests in the seminaries* to enable them to guide the laity better.

Finally, the two meetings in India, more than that in Hong Kong definitely inclined to choose, as an immediate priority, the involvement of the laity in bringing about social justice in society.

Conclusion

If the laity in India is to fulfil its mission, then the recommendations should be taken seriously and practical steps initiated for implementation, through the Commissions of the CBCI and through the per-

sonnel and resources of each local Church. The "adequate formation" must be both *general* and *specialised*. The day to day catechesis, building up the Christian community and enriching the life of families, together with the religious instruction imparted in institutions must go on. The basis of the lay apostolate is a deep personal commitment to Jesus Christ and the foundation for this must already be laid during the early years of youth.

This personal commitment will give the lay person a sense of mission with a responsibility which cannot be transferred to anyone else, and will accord him or her the dignity which is rightly his or hers. I know of one "missionary" who after guiding his prospective believers through a systematic catechumenate leaves them with the conviction that their primary obligation on receiving baptism is to proclaim to their neighbours the love and mercy of Christ the Saviour. In other words the essence of discipleship is apostleship or proclamation of the encounter one has experienced with Christ.

Together with this general formation, every local Church must make use of its existing groups of the lay apostolate and utilise them for training lay leaders Provision must also be made for the apostolate exercised by individuals Some outstanding leaders like to work alone and this must be respected. The bishop will have to exercise his role of leadership by encouraging existing groups of the laity, by discerning new groups and accepting a harmonious pluralism in the field of the lay apostolate Efforts must be made to integrate these groups into the life of the parish and diocese so that they avoid becoming exclusive but work together towards building up the Christian community into an instrument of evangelisation Special attention must be paid to lay persons holding posts of responsibility or who are professionally competent and have already been accepted by their peers for their proficiency. I have in mind officers of the state, judges, advocates, doctors, professors, engineers and journalists and businessmen who ought to know and proclaim the Gospel message with a relevance suited to their milieus If their religious and apostolic formation could match their professional expertise they would be in a position to exercise a very powerful apostolate.

As a practical measure I would enlist the help of our theologians to develop a *theology of the laity relevant to the Indian context*, in the three areas which seem to challenge the Church in India:

(1) The area of *religions* · the challenge of the great religions to the Christian gospel. Much has already been written on this topic, but the role of the lay person in this field, his training and involvement in evangelisation and dialogue is still to be worked out.

(2) The area of the "*missions*" where the response to the preaching of the Gospel takes on a visible form in the growth of new communities of believers. We require a *theology of mission* to suit the various regions in India where this phenomenon is taking place. This must include a scientific study of anthropology, tradition, culture and customs of the people who accept the Gospel. On a more practical level, the training, the status, the wages and security of our catechists should be updated, and plans should also be made to engage full time "lay missionaries" married or single, who will be given the assurance of security of service

(3) The urgent need for the transformation of Indian society on the basis of *social justice* calls for a *political theology* and a theology of development based on the social doctrine of the Church, suitable for Indian situations, to provide guidelines for lay persons who are already active in this field.

It is in this sphere of the "social milieu" that the lay apostolate manifests its specific and distinctive character, for "they are called in a special way to make the Church present and operative in those places and circumstances where *only* through them can she become the salt of the earth" (LG 33).

There is still plenty of scope for providing guidelines in this field for the laity To quote Fr Congar

> This raises the whole question of the *relationship that the Church has with the temporal sphere* her attitude to the temporal, secular sphere which is made up of the whole of man's life his activities, pleasures, etc Despite secularization, we can still say that we are living through one of the most "evangelical" ages of history Wherever we look, new Christian models of research are appearing, giving an extremely pure image of the Gospel, and endeavouring to introduce it into the temporal/secular structures of the world These models are being created by the baptized, with Christ present in their hearts, living and working together with others in every temporal and secular sphere of human existence The *Christian laity are therefore deeply incorporated into the temporal/secular sphere and into society*

Father Congar in the same article draws the attention of the Bishops to "the crisis of the faith among *young people*, many of whom do not even raise the issue of whether or not God exists". His concluding remarks about youth are relevant to Asia, where youth number about sixty percent of the total population

> In a sense, we are facing the phenomenon of "the planet of youth". They are increasingly building up their own world, to get through to them and link them to the Church, they have to be offered the possibility of speaking about themselves they have to be asked to commit themselves, to give their lives for the Church Room has to be found for them in the Church, where they can feel 'at home' [5]

A greater participation of the laity in ecclesial bodies is necessary if the dignity and status of the lay person is to be acknowledged in practice, but this should be accompanied by a change in attitude in all the sections of the People of God A mutual understanding of the roles of the bishop, the religious, the priests and the laity is essential if the harmony of a united mission is to be preserved. Sometimes the laity

5. *The Responsibility of the Bishops to the Laity Committed in Society*, by Yves CONGAR, O P, Vatican City, Pontifical Council for the Laity, 1982, pp. 100-1.

expect too much from the clergy, and it is also true that sometimes the clergy do too much that should and could be done by the laity. A sincere evaluation of the present assignments of the priestly ministry should be made in the light of the teaching of the Council on the *specific* rôle of the laity in the social milieu. The recognition of a basic equality because of baptism and confirmation must also acknowledge an essential difference between the ordained minister and the lay person if one is to remain faithful to the conciliar teaching. The PCL has issued a document[6] describing the relationship between the common priesthood and the ordained ministry It appeals to the priests to keep in mind the specific characteristic of the ordained minisry:

> The Council chose two formulae which complement each other and which, together, seize upon the decisive characteristic of ministry the minister can act "publicly for men in the name of Christ", that is to say "in the person of Christ the Head" (PO 2) (p. 24) —In as much as he is Christ's minister, at the service of this "chosen race" and guarantor of its faithfulness to its identity the priest has the official responsibility for putting into effect the common priesthood His closeness to the community which has been entrusted to him, and to its social milieu and its aim, must facilitate the communication of the faithful And this remains true even if his sense of solidarity with the other members of the association threatens to blur the specific nature of his ministry In order to avoid this risk, the ecclesiastical assistant has to shoulder the tension brought about by his twin concern for fidelity to his priestly identity and identification with the community, and find the unity between the two (pp 2-3).

Co-ordination of the ministries and the charisms in the community is essential for the unity of mission. The document quotes Pope John Paul II to this effect

> In the organisations and associations which you serve,— make no mistake about it !— the Church wishes you to be priests, and the lay people that you meet in them wish you to be priests and nothing but priests Confusion of charisms impoverishes the Church, it does not enrich it in any way[7]

The radical change of attitudes within the sections of the people of God will be greatly enhanced if the *status* and *role* of the laity is clearly defined in detail. I quote a useful extract from a recent publication on this very point·

(a) As regards *status* of the laity·

- they are incorporated into Christ and the people of God by Baptism;
- they, with clerics and religious, are "faithful",
- they are not, however, clerics or religious,
- they share in their own way, actively in the common priesthood and the Church's proper mission;
- they exercise a double function, in the Church and in the world;

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6. *Priests Within Associations of the Faithful. Identity and Mission*, Vatican City, Pontifical Council for the Laity, 1981.

7. *Ibid*, p 13. The quotation is taken from the address to the ecclesiastical assistants of International Catholic Associations, given on December 14th, 1979. Cf. *DC* 77 (1980), p. 64.

- that which is distinctive of their vocation is "secularity";
- they share, in their own way, in Christ's office as priest, prophet and king;
- they enjoy equal dignity and freedom as children of God;
- they are obliged to love and foster the Kingdom of God;
- they have certain fundamental subjective rights derived from their status, such as to doctrinal formation, to Word and Sacraments, to share in worship and liturgy, to express their desires and needs, to immunity from coercion, to associate, to be judged and punished fairly, etc.;
- likewise, by virtue of their status, they have responsibilities, such as to respect the clergy, and to accept their teaching and norms as teachers and leaders

(b) As regards the *role* of the laity:

- first, and special to them in a particular way, is the *consecratio mundi* and all that this implies, viz, ordering the temporal order from within, by seeking the Kingdom of God as Christians,
- included in the common apostolate, shared by all the laity, are the following

  creating a climate disposing to good human and Christian relations,

  creating just institutions in the economic, social and political fields, both at the national and international levels,

  bringing the spirit of the Gospel into professions and work, into the arts and sciences and branches of technology, which involves developing the cultural potential of society, and professional and technical competence and skills for the service of the community,

  guarding family life and marriages,

  creating institutions of social security and aid.
- specific apostolates include the following

  collaboration by some, more immediately with the apostolate of the hierarchy, such as in catechesis, social justice, etc, and receiving a general mandate for specific tasks, either as individuals or in organised groups (Catholic Action),

  . being available for a special work of co-operation with the hierarchy, who, by special mandate or canonical mission, invite some of the laity to carry out certain works or offices for the exercise of which some share in non-divine power is required.[8]

A relevant passage from the conciliar document on the Missions is a constant reminder that we in India have a long way to go when we consider "that the Church has not been fully established, and is not yet fully alive, nor is it a perfect sign of Christ among men, unless there exists a laity worth the name, working along with the hierarchy" (AG 21). However, the three meetings with their attitudes and recommendations give us hope and encouragement to attain this goal in the not too distant future.

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8. "The Role of the Laity in the Church and the World according to the Canon Law of the Future", by James Esler, S M., in *An Introduction to the New Code of Canon Law*, edited by Geoffrey Robinson, Canon Law Society of Australia and New Zealand, 1982.

A Chosen Race, a Royal Priesthood, a Holy Nation!

An outline of a few considerations on the role of lay leadership in the development work of the Church in India

S. SANTIAGO*

1. Basic Considerations

BEFORE I highlight a few issue-oriented considerations relating to the role of lay leadership in the development work of the Church in India, I am bound to recall the teaching of the Church on a few points which are basic to all one can say on the subject. The basic considerations belong to the realm of the ecclesiology, i.e. the understanding of the Church

(i) Firstly, the laity are baptised and reborn in Christ and confirmed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit "The laity derive the right and duty with respect to the apostolate from their union with Christ, their Head Incorporated into Christ's Mystical Body through baptism and strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit through confirmation, they are assigned to the apostolate by the Lord Himself. They are consecrated into a royal priesthood and a holy people in order that they ... may witness to Christ throughout the world." (Vatican II, *The Apostolate of the Laity*, 3) People of other religions, faiths and creeds, as well as non-believers, though also children of one and the same God, are not the laity, and do not have the charism we are considering now.

(ii) Secondly, the laity, the religious (brothers and sisters), the clergy, the bishops and the pope, together constitute the entire common Christian faithful — the People of God. "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation, a people set apart to sing the praises of God who called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light" (1 Pet 2:9). Their Christian obligations and rights originally

*Mr S. SANTIAGO was Assistant Director of the ISI Extension Service and Executive Director of the IGSSS At present he is the Consultant in Human Development Promotion to B. H Misereor e.V., West Germany, their partners and other Development Agencies in Asia. His address is: E-18, Lajpat Nagar III, New Delhi 110024.

flow from the sacraments of God's love manifested in Jesus Christ. *They do not flow from humanism, or ideology, or any individual prophet, or any group of prophets, or a social analysis to be made or a methodology to be followed.* The powers, obligations and rights of either the ordained priesthood or of the common priesthood do not derive from their personal qualities or their achievements, although understanding, competence and commitment are needed for a justice-oriented awareness and a liberation-oriented action. This laity constituted by faith in Jesus Christ and sacramental consecration includes the rich and the poor, the so-called high castes and low castes, the educated and the uneducated, the employed and the unemployed, the just and the unjust, the humane and the cruel, the oppressor and the oppressed. The specific identity of the charism of the laity (the common priesthood) is also related to the specific identity and charism of the clergy (the ordained priesthood) in the Church. Hence, while reflecting on the role of the lay leadership, we cannot avoid reflecting on the role of the clerical leadership. In fact, both roles are only two sides of the same coin.

(iii) Thirdly, "flowing from their rebirth in Christ, there is a genuine equality of dignity and action among all of Christ's faithful" (Canon 208). Vatican II and the revised Code of Canon Law teach us that the institutional Church, comprising the hierarchy and the laity, is primarily not pyramidal but egalitarian. There is a basic equality and dignity of laity and clergy. The pyramidal Church — both in vision and mission — of Vatican I became the People of God of Vatican II, at least in vision. The hierarchy and the laity form a fellowship and communion in which they share together the Christian call to service, witness and worship. They are jointly responsible as partners for the life and work of the Church — each order according to its own specific vocation and charism — both participating and sharing in the priestly, prophetic and kingly (governing) functions included in the church's mission. In this mission the ministerial priesthood is a special gift of Jesus Christ, primarily to serve the common priesthood, with a special authority to interpret the word of God, to absolve from sin, and to transform the earthly bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ in an action of thanksgiving. The common priesthood and the ordained priesthood, fed by the Body and Blood of Christ, together must serve and transform the world in the love of Christ.

(iv) Fourthly, a proper understanding and exercise of leadership of the laity and the clergy within the Church is necessary for the proper understanding and exercise of the leadership of the laity and the clergy in the world. The Church is a spiritual communion. It is also a living

organism rooted in the world. The Church is there not only to witness to the primacy of the spiritual goal of man over his temporal interests (cf Christ's reply to Satan that man cannot live on bread alone, he lives on every word that God utters) the Church has also to witness to Christ's love and his demand of justice in the world, which means ensuring economic growth, distributive justice, self reliance, equality and participation of all Through the activity of a laity accepted as equals and through their special responsibility the Church has a role in the task of securing the earthly bread for millions who lack food, shelter, clothing, employment, income, education, health and the fulfilment of their God given and inviolable human rights The Church has to motivate the poor *not* to accept passively their oppression, or the offer of the pie in the sky or power without pie on earth

(v) One important obligation and a challenge that arises out of the above mentioned basic considerations is that neither the clergy nor the laity can sidestep the role of the lay leadership first within the Church as communion and fellowship and then in its outreach to the world A proper recognition facilitation and implementation of the authentic leadership roles of the laity and the clergy within the Church structures is a prerequisite for the understanding and animation of an authentic leadership of the laity and the clergy in the world from the grassroot level upwards Today some priests and religious leave their own institutions to engage themselves directly in the peoples struggles at the grassroot level It is their right to choose their course of action Others advocate that the lay leadership should be developed at the grassroot levels only outside and beyond the Church structures But indifference to the laity s role within the Church structures is linked with a failure of the ministry to the world

II. Issue-Oriented Considerations

It needs to be repeated that just as the special function of the ordained priesthood is to provide the spiritual leadership by engaging primarily and directly in the service of the Word and sacraments, the special role of the laity is to seek the Kingdom of God by engaging in the renewal of the temporal order and by exercising their priestly, prophetic and kingly function in each and all of the programmes and occupations of social, economic cultural and political nature At the same time, the functions of the clergy and the laity are not to be considered exclusive and compartmentalized, nor to be opposed to each other There is a lot of confusion and even polemics in the actual implementation of the special roles of the ordained priesthood and the

common priesthood at the level of Christian leadership within the Church and in the world.

1. *Who Are the Poor ?*

(a) Christ brought good news to the poor He proclaimed liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind He set the oppressed free. The Church — both the clergy and the laity — has to continue Christ's mission and take the good news to the poor, proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind and set the oppressed free. In its service, the Church must thus make a preferential option for the poor — the economically deprived, the socially oppressed, and the politically powerless.

(b) But, in the most fundamental salvific mission of the Church — which is a mission of the laity as well — did not Christ include also the so-called economically rich and socially powerful on earth, who are actually the poorest in His Kingdom ? Is it not more difficult for a rich man to go to heaven than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle ? Jesus warned that the rich would be condemned, even if their wealth was justly acquired, unless they share it with the poor Are the rich and powerful to be left to themselves and be lost ?

(c) Is not a mission of the Church leadership to the "rich" also in favour of the poor — in addition to organising the poor themselves ? Will not the raising of the economic, social and political level of the poor people *and* the advancement of the "sharing level" of the rich through repentence, conversion and love, go hand in hand in the mission of the Church ? Or, should we proclaim that the rich cannot be converted and have to be eliminated by the violence of the poor ? Should we reserve the Eucharist only for the poor ? The Christian answer to this is, obviously, "no" !

2. *Absolutism or Pluralism ?*

(a) In the life of the Christian community and the Church's structures, the lay people are co-workers in their own right They participate in worship, in the proclamation of the Word and in service In the same sphere, the clergy has a role of leadership and pastoral authority in which the laity also share, but this authority is understood in terms of coordination and service, never in terms of power to dominate or control, and certainly not in an exclusive sense It is neither all-extensive nor absolute. One cannot force one's own vision of social change on the other. Continuous dialogue and mutual respect will facilitate consensus in action. Participation, collaboration and co-responsibility

the [illegible] structures. [illegible]
imply openness to various alternatives. [illegible] must give way to pluralism, and indoctrination be replaced by responsible freedom — freedom to choose between several courses of action. Collaboration with people of other faiths and persuasions calls for openness to their religious beliefs, ideologies and strategies.

(b) The education and organisation at the macro and micro levels of the rural poor, like the landless, the traditional fishermen, etc, for specific issues, of movements of specialised sectors like students, women, tribals, linguistic and religious groups, of social movements, championing the cause of the oppressed social groups, such as the Dalit movement — all these are important objectives and goals and deserve priority of action or support from the Church through the proper means

(c) But other spheres are also of crucial importance, i e., the organisations of political and civic life, such as political parties, legislative and administrative structures, trade unions and workers' organisations, socio-economic primary organisations like the farmers movements, co-operatives in the fields of production, marketing, processing, consumption, social service organisations the training and motivation of social workers for relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction, socio-economic development, liberation and agrarian reforms, the employment and health fields and the professional groups such as entrepreneurs doctors, engineers, lawyers, scientists, educationists, administrative and business management personnel persons engaged in mass communication media, etc All these forces put together determine the quality of life of the people and the destiny of the poor in the world The laity is specially called upon to infuse all these areas with Christian values, and thus renew the temporal order Thus no one area can claim to produce integral human development single-handedly

(d) Public life is very often thought of only as politics at the macro or the micro levels But what about the primary importance of one's profession, the area of work, and the means of livelihood ? The laity is called here to the basic responsibility of being honest, hard-working, loving and just people

3 *Class Mobilisation or Unity in Love ?*

(a) There is in the Church today a conflict which closely parallels that of the Church at Corinth, narrated in the 12th chapter of St Paul's first letter to it The battle was among those upon whom the Spirit had bestowed certain gifts or charisma, some claiming superiority over the others. St Paul met the problem by stressing the unity in love as

the ideal for the Church which those Christians were called to build. One and the same Spirit is the author of different charisms that promote and strengthen the growth of the Body of Christ, and love is the link that binds them together in unity All the various creative ministries constitute the living organism of the Church.

(b) The laity should consider their main profession and their family as the first and most important areas where their charisms have to be developed to foster their own legitimate growth which also serves the common good. This does not receive adequate emphasis these days in the mission of the Church. Secondly, the Church leadership, particularly the lay leadership, is called upon to promote conciliation and unity in the midst of the diversity of approaches and methodologies followed in promoting the integral human development of people.

(c) It is basically true that it is at the altar that the Church's ministry of conciliation and unity is achieved. At the eucharistic celebration, two special aspects of Christ's action are experienced — his *compassion*, sacrifice and love for the neighbour, especially the poor, the hungry and the oppressed and his ceaseless *prayer* for the spiritually poor

(d) The conciliation of these two areas of Christian life demands also the correlation and conciliation of apparently opposite dualities which are not really self-contradictory such as temporal and spiritual, economic and political, formal and non formal, institutional and non-institutional, curative and preventive, rich and poor, clerics and laity, etc The integral human development is the end product of the creative and redemptive transformation that is brought about continously by uniting each of the pairs and their corresponding charisms and strategies, at first apparently contradictory

e) The distinctive role of the priest at the eucharistic celebration is to *unite* his people into *one* body, and to enable them to offer themselves as a worthy sacrifice of praise and repentence to the Father This is the meaning of the Eucharist Can a priest or a lay leader promote class war ? Does conscientization mean a growth in hatred, or must it lead to conciliation ? Can social analysis be used at the service of the Christian mission of love and unity ? I do not agree with the view that priests should altogether shun the movements that entail political, economic, civic and social commitments, and that these are the lay people's exclusive responsibility But I believe without reservation that the priest, the celebrant of unity in love and sacrifice at the Eucharist, and for that matter also the laity who share in the priestly function, cannot divide the Body of Christ through class mobi-

[illegible] structures. [illegible] Beyond liberation from oppression, we are called upon by Jesus to make a brother out of an enemy. This is more difficult and yet more crucial than organising a class war and even winning it. (Note, however, that struggling against injustice and unjust structures can be misrepresented as class war)

4 *Social Analysis, a Tool*

(a) Social analysis, otherwise also known as structural analysis or system analysis, is of recent origin within the ambit of the Church's apostolate, and is a new and important gift added on the long list of other charisms already being exercised in the Church and the world. It is an educational process used to awaken a critical sense which will lead to reflection on the society in which we live and on its values. It is meant to be a practical education, it comes through action, participation and vital contact with the reality of injustice It helps to realise that change is necessary It helps people to identify issues and choose what to do next so that change takes place

(b) Social analysis is terribly important in the modern methods of social action for change More and more lay leaders must be trained in this methodology However, a distorted analysis may spell dangers through jaundiced understanding and lop-sided planning for action In the first place, people who do structural analysis have experienced the darker side of the world and the injustice around them But social analysis normally does not foster an enlightened national or community spirit and a love for one s own country and people, a reasonable pride in its achievements, and, above all, a determination to contribute to their growth and development God is present both in the struggle (crucifixion) and in the achievement (resurrection) Divine discontent needs to be aroused among the deprived, but a hatred and an urge to get a tooth for a tooth, an eye for an eye, blood for blood will destroy the very purpose of divine discontent enjoined in the New Testament of Jesus Christ

Secondly, a social analysis approach which excludes the understanding and promotion of inter-religious values, misses an essential dimension of the human person. It is the element of transcendence which is constitutive of the human being Before becoming a political animal, man is born a religious person In a multi-religious community, inter-religious reflection and appreciation and an openness to different ideologies and religious options is a necessary basis for integral human development. Socio-political analysis is important, but without a socio-religious analysis and appreciation, the understanding becomes

lop-sided. In this respect, people can only be misled by those priests, religious and lay leaders who care more for politics than for religion, and who assume the superiority of political analysis over religious analysis, appreciation and application.

Thirdly, the social analysts very often assume, in a rather simplistic way, that unjust structures must be done away with altogether in this world, before a new and just order of society can be established. While injustice has to be fought with Christian determination and love, we have to work for the social, economic and political advancement particularly of the poor and the marginalised within, and in spite of, the unjust structures. This is the evangelical task and challenge. It is not a question of pulling down all the existing so-called exploiting structures first, but it is a question of transforming and renewing the existing structures by Christ's justice and love After all, each one of us makes use of the unjust structures in our day-to-day life and all of us embody in ourselves injustice in varying degrees, even while we are rightly concerned about injustice being meted out to the poor and work for radical social change Can we help the social analysis to become balanced and realistic and see to it that it does not become an instrument of distortion and mystification ?

5 *Clergy, Religious and Laity in India*

(a) It may be that the Church s full-time personnel in India, though said to be inadequate for the total evangelical tasks in the country, are too many to facilitate a proper role and function of the laity, first within the Church According to the *Catholic Directory* of 1984, there are now in India 125 bishops, 7058 diocesan priests, 4943 religious priests 2801 religious brothers and 49,956 religious sisters According to C R I data the figures are much higher, and according to it, among the religious, a majority numbering about 43,000 are in the line of education, 9500 in health, 8000 in social work, 1500 in mass media, 800 in evangelisation and 6500 in other activities With these large numbers of clergy and religious doing a work which can often be done and perhaps should be done by lay people, is there a reasonable hope for the laity to assume proper responsibilities in the Church structures ? No wonder that lay people are now being told not to be mini-priests, but to join politics and become there Catholic actionists

(b) In their meeting held at Nagpur (1984) the Indian bishops recognised that the hierarchical structure of the Church suffers from attitudes of patronage and paternalism, a centralised authority of priests and religious in the administration of spiritual and material services, and

also that even after Vatican II, there has been [illegible] of bishops and priests to give positions of responsibility to lay people. The meeting reaffirmed that unless lay people are truly involved in dialogue, participation and co-responsibility in the life and work of the Church, the Church will continue to be identified with the hierarchy only, and the vast resources of the People of God will remain untapped. Unfortunately, in their recommendations for action, the bishops have put the onus and responsibility of proving fitness on the laity, who are at the helpless end, instead of putting it equally on themselves and on the priests who need to understand and implement the new ecclesiology with courageous humility, and without waiting any longer

(c) In 1981 the Jesuits in India, the largest and an intensely pioneering religious congregation, at the end of a prayerful reflection on, and analysis of "Participation in Perspective", came up with an understanding of several obstacles to lay participation at different levels:

On the part of the clergy — a distrust in the capacity of lay people and fear of a slow-down in efficiency and commitment, a sense of insecurity in working as partners and colleagues, a sense of it being below one's dignity" to be financially and performance-wise accountable to lay people, a sense of loss of personal control, a tendency to be quick to point out lay failures, the proprietory ownership syndrome, a love of status and protocol, a fear of exposing divisions and inviting factionalism and litigation, the colonial mentality of clericalising lay movements, the power and prerogatives arising out of the monopoly and full control of economic resources, technical knowledge, etc., now further strengthened by overseas Church aid, intolerance and unrest towards the advancement of laity in knowledge experience, self-reliance, freedom and autonomy, a fear of losing the constitutional privileges of minority status, if laymen came in, etc

On the part of the laity — an unwillingness to accept responsibility, a clericalised mentality and treating the world as purely temporal and unholy, a domesticated mentality, putting the clergy on the top of the pyramid clamours for unduly radical changes like asking for transfer of power instead of sharing of power

On the part of the public — pressurizing the clergy and the religious to hold on to their secular engagements because of the high quality of their service, with a deep commitment to persons

The Jesuits called upon all sections in the Church, first and foremost to develop faith in human beings. They emphasised the need for the Church to make serious attempts to make a significant invest-

[illegible] the lay leaders to become men and women of [illegible] [illegible]sional competence and secular formation for effective [illegible] in their apostolate in the Church and in the world. The [illegible]tion of suitable Church structures and institutions and even [illegible]ment of particular works or institutions are to be shared with [illegible]ers on terms of equality and responsible freedom.

(d) To the above I should add that a great stumbling block to develop the laity is the prelacy and absolutism syndrome of the episcopacy of the Church in India The Catholic Bishops' Conference of India assumes in practice the sole official and representative responsibility for the entire Catholic community in India, not only in religious but also in temporal and secular matters like education, aid for development and even politics The great need of the hour is for the bishops to practice seriously a "theology of implementation" of the recommendations and imperatives they themselves make in their own collective wisdom and statements They said at Nagpur (1984) that, "with special reference to the role of the laity, a two-fold strategy is called for (1) an adequate formation and training of the laity and (2) an organisational change The organisational change they have in mind is primarily the participatory structures urged by Vatican II and recently enjoined by the Code of Canon Law — parish councils, diocesan councils, inter-diocesan councils, national councils, finance councils, etc

(e) Only when credibility is established by the implementation of this inside-renewal measures in the Church will the other measures recommended for the renewal of the world have meaning and lasting effect This "theology of implementation" must also apply to the new Code of Canon Law Laws are enacted for implementation The new Code of Canon Law is rightly acclaimed as giving the laity a due place in the Catholic Church It has taken a very long time for the Church to incorporate the rights and obligations of the laity in its legislation of government the Church is now opening almost all doors to the laity, except where the sacred orders are operative Lay people can on principle know and assist in the financial administration of the Church They can teach in seminaries They can become chancellors of dioceses and even judges in matrimonial cases Training and formation are important, but the laity, like the clergy, fulfil their vocation by engagement and action It is fair to say that today in India there are hundreds of lay leaders who can fill such positions without any further training and formation as a pre-requisite, though education and training has to be continuous and co-terminous with the life and work of each and every person — clerical or lay.

[illegible] The Role of the Church Development Structures

What could be the role of the Church development structures in India in this whole affair of the promotion of the laity ? I am taking the liberty of making a few suggestions for careful study, intensive and extensive analysis and consultations, adequate preparation, bold experimentation and phased implementation

1 There is need for broad-based, participative and representative growth of Church-related development structures For instance:

(a) Diocesan Social Service Societies can and should include, apart from individuals (particularly laity), representatives of other Catholic development agencies (religious, lay, other suitable organisations) in their general and governing bodies, committees, etc Wherever there are the so-called action groups involving Catholic leadership (lay, clerical or religious), such action groups should also participate in the organisational functioning of the diocesan development centres.

(b) Similarly state level/regional level forums should extend their present membership of only diocesan directors to include representatives of diocesan Social Service Societies other Catholic development agencies (religious, lay other suitable agencies) working at the state level/regional level, etc, in the membership of their general and governing bodies, committees, etc Particularly, wherever there are the so-called action groups, involving Catholic leadership (lay clerical or religious), such action groups should also participate in the organisational functioning of these forums

(c) If this is done the Church development centres could really become the voice of the People of God as a whole and would be truly participative and representative, though the viewpoints represented may very much be in conflict This process will be correlated to the Eucharist celebrated meaningfully in all its various dimensions There will be some confusion, nay, even some confrontation, but it will be sorted out through dialogue and participation The leadership at every level, lay, clerical or religious whether conservative or radical, should be open to other viewpoints, ideologies, strategies, since all may be different gifts of the one and the same Lord No one should insist on testing somebody else s vision and methodology, for that would be wielding a power of a fascist type and not rendering service in love. It would go against promoting freedom, frankness and choice in dialogue, participation and action We must just keep in mind the common goal of building the body of Christ and serving God's Kingdom.

2. The [illegible] of the Church in India ([illegible] and [illegible] engagements, as said earlier) is now pyramidal. Its national [illegible] should go in for a bold implementation of Vatican II and the Code of Canon Law It cannot shrink away from this challenge. Surely the bishops can continue to have their say at different levels, as they do now But the national organisation should have wider and deeper roots in the people and the development agencies at work.

(a) The *All India Seminar on the Church in India Today* of 1969 (is it still valuable or has it become already obsolete ?), after 7 days of deliberation, recommended the formation of a National Catholic Development Board, at least with a semi-autonomous status This 15-year old proposal, inspired by Vatican II and voiced by the Church in India at Bangalore, may be worth reviving for fresh consideration and action

(b) On many occasions recommendations were made regarding the functioning of the Episcopal Commissions on Justice, Peace and Development and on the Laity and Family The structure and membership of these commissions should include representatives of all sections of the People of God, particularly of the laity These commissions should also include lay workers, (full-time or part-time), panelists of lay people, etc

(c) The policies and programmes of Caritas India, along with those of other national Catholic development agencies, could involve the participation of local, regional and national representatives (agencies and individuals) in a participatory evaluation The general body of Caritas India could be made more broad based, participative and representative of different sections of the People of God in India, including those engaged in the political struggle of the poor people at different levels There should be no need to play a hide and seek game with them, nor to act in a benevolent way towards them

(d) The Church institutions — schools, health, welfare homes — should become communitarian, involving the participation of the neighbouring lay people, in management and policy making This is as essential as their work of reaching out to the poor and the oppressed

IV. Conclusion

1. The above-mentioned suggestions are not only based on my two decades of work as a Church-related lay worker in development, but also on the inspiration gained during my encounter with the Church

in other Asian countries where the above measures are already being implemented as part of the normal growth, without any extraordinary debate and without timidity and the resulting inertia. At least at the levels of the Church development structures, the clergy in India could now turn to lay leaders and say to them: "Come and take the job we have been holding only until you came along. We, the clergy, have been only substituting for the competent lay persons and now that you have arrived on the scene, we can return to what we were trained to do, ordained to do and should do best — to be the ministers of the Word, the facilitators of the community's prayer at the altar, the enablers of the laity; and to venture out into new frontiers like leading grassroot level struggles against oppression, because we are now free to do so."

2. In this process a clear distinction should be made between giving or transferring power to the laity and enabling the laity to share and participate in the power in terms of responsibility and service. Paternalism is out. Similarly, the new understanding should not mislead the lay people to feel that their role is to regain the power lost to the clergy. In the Church, no one has any power to wield against others. Only the spirit of service must guide our action. Mutual trust and accountability are virtues that will contribute to the success of our common commitment to the service of the Kingdom and the people.

3. It is essential that in India, bishops, priests, brothers, sisters and lay people in proportionate numbers sit together to reflect on their own experiences, to exchange views and inspire one another and to pray in togetherness, and then to draw up concrete plans to enable the lay people to play their rightful role in the Church and the world. For this, what is required is not only a political will but, more urgently, a spiritual will to put God more at the centre of our lives.

Document

The "Lineamenta" of the 1987 Synod on the Laity

The Synod of Bishops originally announced for the fall of 1986 has been postponed to October 1987 But the "lineamenta" (guidelines) on the synodal theme, "Vocation and Mission of the Laity in the Church and in the World Twenty Years after the Second Vatican Council", were released by the Vatican on February 19th this year. The publication of this document begins a period of reflection and consultation in the local churches as a preparation for the Synod. The fruits of this reflection will help the Secretariat for the Synod to formulate the Working Paper (*Instrumentum Laboris*) for the Synod itself. The "lineamenta" is a document that should provoke and invite a deeper reflection on the vocation and mission of the laity. The points mentioned in the document are only take-offs for discussion in the Church

The document has a very brief introduction and three parts Each part ends with a series of questions, which we shall copy at the end In the introduction, the observation of the Holy Father that "the mission of the laity as an integral part of the salvific mission of the entire people of God is of fundamental importance for the life of the Church and foi service which the Church herself is called to render to the world of humanity and of temporal realities" is significant If we care for the philosophical meaning of the terms used in theology, the expression of the mission of the laity being "integral" to the mission of the Church needs to be discussed The term "integral" bristles with controversy since the Synod on Justice 1971, where action on behalf of Justice and participation in the transformation of the world were said to be rather a "constitutive" than "integral" part of evangelisation. Will the Synod of 1987 call the mission of the laity only "integral" to the mission of the Church ? The Pope at any rate qualifies his affirmation by saying that the mission of the laity is "of *fundamental* importance for the life of the Church"

Part I takes a look at the post-conciliar situation. The "lineamenta" recall the conciliar teaching on the laity in *Lumen Gentium* 31, *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 1, *Ad Gentes* 21 and *Gaudium et Spes*, and the further developments of the conciliar teaching by Paul VI and John Paul II, by the synods of 1971, 1974, 1977, 1980 and 1983, and the new Code of Canon Law The fruits of the Council are seen in the lay people's awareness of thier responsibility for the mission of the Church, in the specific "incarnate" lay spirituality, and in the many spontaneous lay groupings and associations that have developed. Priests are called upon to *listen* to lay people and recognize their competence. There is the problem of the representative "ecclesiality" of the laity in their temporal activity. There is also the question of the development

of pastoral councils and ecclesial ministries which call for participation in the life of the Church but should avoid the "clericalizations" of the lay vocation. The secular condition of the laity gives them a specifically (not exclusively) secular vocation to seek the Kingdom and be a leaven in the temporal affairs, without however slipping into a secularism which is not compatible with our faith.

Part 2 speaks of the laity's vocation and mission in terms of their being in the Church for the world. In the Church, which is the universal sacrament of salvation, there is the common priesthood of the people of God. This is a "*condition*" of election, consecration and grace prior to being a *ministry* to others. There is also in the Church a ministerial priesthood and it "is ordered to the common priesthood". There is a co-responsibility of every Christian in the fellowship of the Church and a true equality of dignity and action among all, in the building up of the body of Christ. The "secularity" of the laity is more than a sociological datum. It is also a theological and ecclesial principle It overcomes the dichotomy between life in the Church and life in the world This part also mentions various offices and ministries that can be given to the laity, taking into account the already existing practices of lay ministries in different local churches.

Part 3 speaks of the laity as witnesses of Christ in the world. Quoting AA 33 the "lineamenta" refer to Christ sending the laity with an allusion to the mission given to the 72 disciples (Lk 10:1). There is no Christian vocation without a call to the apostolate It is a call to service of the Church and of humanity. The task of the laity is the animation of the temporal order. The areas of the apostolate of the laity listed are specially the defence of human dignity and rights, the area of work, the area of science and technology and the humanization of culture The apostolate of the laity can be exercised individually or in groups and associations. The formation of the laity is many-sided and includes the human, doctrinal, spiritual, social and apostolic aspects The family (the domestic church), parishes and educational institutions are significant areas of lay apostolate and formation.

The laity living the life according to the Spirit in their temporal commitments will be inspired by faith and charity and learn to read the "signs" of the presence of God in history. They will avoid a flight from the world but rather grow in "worldly" holiness.

In the discussions the experience by the laity of their vocation and mission in the Church and the world should be the methodological starting point The "lineamenta" themselves remind us that the precious fruits of the Council should come from the widespread masses of the laity and not from the elite only. This implies that there is the indispensable task of listening to the awakened voices of the laity at large and of the voiceless in the Church. This point, implicit in the "lineamenta", should be explicitly studied in all future discussions on the subject, at whatever level. The text might at times give the impression of a certain abstract calling to mind of the points of the Council and subsequent magisterium, without a sufficent historical consciousness of the actual state of the laity in the post-Vatican Church.

Perhaps the concept of "lay leadership" in the Church needs to be reflected on and articulated in relation to the function of the clergy. In the section on the spirituality of the laity, the practice of prayerfully reading the Gospel and reflecting on it, so common among basic Christian communities in many places, is regretfully not mentioned in the "lineamenta". More and more lay people must reflect on their own vocation and articulate it and thus contribute to a sound theology and spirituality of the laity. This document is meant to be a help towards that.

S. AROKIASAMY, S.J.

Questions Proposed in the "Lineamenta"

Part 1

1. *Has the teaching of the Second Vatican Council concerning the place and tasks of the laity in the Church and in the World been welcomed, understood and properly presented in the local churches, with particular reference to the laity themselves? What concrete initiatives have been undertaken to achieve this goal?*

2. *Twenty years after the Council, in your particular churches, what are the positive fruits derived from the Council and what are the new problems that the laity must face in relation to their vocation and mission?*

3. *In this period and on the basis of the fullest understanding of God's plan that the whole Church be the "universal sacrament of salvation", how has the consciousness of the necessity and irreplaceability of the pastoral mission of the laity matured? Or has this maturity been based on contingent factors such as, for example, the scarcity of priests?*

4. *Has the conciliar interpretation of the figure of the lay-person been faithfully presented in your communities or has it undergone substantial modifications in the years succeeding the Council?*

5. *Is the consciousness that the laity belong to the Church and participate in her mission of salvation developed only among lay groups, movements and associations or is it present in all the laity? Is it only an "elitist" consciousness or a truly "popular" one?*

6. *Has the awareness that "in the Church there is diversity of ministry but a unity of mission" (AA 2) helped both the pastors and the laity to put into effect that "familiar relationship" of which the Council repeatedly speaks (LG 37)?*

Part 2

1. *What local baptismal consciousness is present among the various members of your local church? Are baptism and the other sacraments of Christian initiation (confirmation and the eucharist) seen and lived as the foundation and dynamism of everyone's participation in the life and mission of the Church?*

2. How is the difference between the common priesthood and the ministerial priesthood, between the mission of the laity and the mission of the pastors, as reaffirmed by the Second Vatican Council, understood, accepted and lived out at the level both of reflection and pastoral practice ?

3. How is the secular character, described by the Council as "proper and particular to" the laity due to their participating in the salvific mission of the Church, perceived and lived out ? What pastoral problems are created by the concrete forms in which the Christian laity live out the Church-world relationship ?

4 In your local church does the problem of ministries entrusted to the laity present itself ? If so, in what way and for what reasons ?

Part 3

1. In the lives of men and women today, and particularly in the context of your local church, what are the areas which call with greatest urgency for the involvement of the apostolate of the laity ?

2 How is the wealth of the diverse forms of the lay apostolate utilised in your local church ? How is this richness used to arouse a personal apostolic awareness in the individual faithful ?

3 What problems are posed by the pluralism of forms of the lay apostolate ? How can the activities of the laity be coordinated at the parrochial, diocesan, national and international level ?

4 What fruits have been borne in your church by the pastoral councils ?

5 How can the laity be formed in their vocation and for their mission in the Church and in the world ?

6 What elements need to be underlined as essential and significant in the spirituality that is proper to the laity ? What stimuli can be derived from a spirituality of secular institutes ?

Correspondence

Prayer

Dear Editor,

May I thank and congratulate you for your issue on Spirituality (February 1985)? Even Subhash's fulminations were useful in that they produced those stimulating suggestions for praying the Psalms But may I confess to two disappointments. One is personal I had hoped that in an issue on Spirituality my own little offering (*A Prayer*) might be reviewed That would surely not have taken much time or effort when done by your experts *

The second disappointment was with your leading article As a PPP who often has to preach to other PPPs, my experience would lead me to be more optimistic than the author both as to the quality and quantity of their prayer But what really surprised me were his suggestions which, I suspect, would make it much more difficult and not easier to pray For they demand a certain amount of reading and a good memory — in neither of which are PPPs particularly strong And some of his ideas, well —"chaqu'un à son goût" (a sardonic French friend would add, "mauvais"!) — but I wonder how much "The saints go marching in ", or even couplets like "When once the Mahanadi was crossed by the king, the ant saw that crossing was a manageable thing", can help in real prayer I personally am a devotee of the *bhakti* saints and find many of their *dohas* very prayable (a book of my transcreations of some of Kabir's *dohas* is in the press) but not the ones mentioned by the author.

My own suggestion based on my experience and that of others is that the Jesus Prayer itself is very easily memorizable and most prayable The version I use, the longest ("Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, have mercy on me a sinner") is rich in doctrine and spirituality as I have tried to explain in the little book I mentioned in the first paragraph

I fully agree that the biggest tragedy in the world is the tragedy of a prayerless priest Let us, by all means, try to avert it

The Cathedral,
Ajmer 305001

Fr R H LESSER

No such book has come to the editors for review — Ed

Local Church

You Africans are missionaries to yourselves You may, and you must, have an African Christianity you will be able to remain sincerely African even in your own interpretation of the Christian life, you will be able to formulate Catholicism in terms congenial to your own culture, you will be capable of bringing to the Catholic Church the precious and original contribution of "negritude", which she needs particularly in this historic hour

Pope PAUL VI in Kampala, Uganda, 31 July 1969
Cf. *AAS* 61 (1969) pp. 573-8.

Book Reviews

Systematic Theology

Revelation and its Interpretation. By Aylward SHORTER *London Geoffrey Chapman*, 1983 Pp. XIV-277 No price given.

A missionary theologian in Africa, the author deals here with various aspects and dimensions of revelation, and combines beautifully the traditional and the modern approaches The first chapter deals with religion and its relevance in the contemporary world Granting the social dimensions of religion, Shorter emphasizes that we cannot forget the aspect of the divine element present in all religions There is no dichotomy between the natural and the supernatural they blend together to give meaning to the totality of the human person

In chapters two and three, Shorter explains how in the Old Testament God revealed himself as a "living God" who was very much concerned in the everyday events of His people "The Exodus and the Covenant constituted a decisive moment of revelation, a dramatic intervention by Yahweh on behalf of Israel" (47) God also revealed Himself through prophets The psalms speak of God's manifestation in nature God is revealing Himself in many and varied ways to all those who are willing to recognize Him

In chapter four, the author deals with the final self-revelation of God in Jesus The New Testament presents Jesus as the total revelation of God to humanity The heart of Jesus' teaching was that God in his loving mercy and forgiveness accepts us in our sinfulness The following chapters speak of the continuing revelation of God He reveals Himself to us in many ways and through various events The Church is one of the mediums of such an ongoing revelation God also speaks to us through other religions and through many dedicated people who have committed themselves to the promotion of the Kingdom of God. The author deals with God's revelation through Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam

I find that this book is very useful for professors and students of theology. It gives us an inculturated approach to the study of revelation. God is not the monopoly of a few but the Father of all human beings. He has revealed and is revealing Himself to each and everyone in this world, in some way or other

Jose THAYIL, S.J.

What is Religion ? By Rubem ALVES. Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books, 1984. Pp 92 $ 4.95

Written in lyric style and contemporary idiom, this short exposition of the meaning of religion addresses itself to the modern reader faced with the glaring oppositions of his world, either between the powerful and the dominated, or between the scientific, technological and utilitarian mentality trying "to construct a world in which God is not necessary as a working hypothesis" (2) and the religious, symbolic, utopian, dream-like and meaningful human endeavour. The essay can best be summed up in the concluding words of Alves himself: "And the reader, perplexed in search of a final certainty, asks, 'But, does God exist ? Does life have meaning ? Does the universe have a face ? Is death my sister ?' To which the religious soul could only reply 'I do not know. But I ardently desire that it be true. And I make the leap unreservedly. For it is more beautiful to risk on the side of hope than to have certainty on the side of a cold and senseless universe' " These words contain the key concepts, questions and directions which the Brazilian Protestant theologian explores in his thought-provoking work. "Religions are the dreams of those who are awake" (61). — to imbue life with hope without which man loses the will to live and to create; — to articulate the discrepancies in this world with a view to transforming them; — to empower the weak, faced with threats, internal and external;— to envision all of reality from a point of departure in the necessity that life make sense, — to affirm the meaning of life in the face of death (so that one meets death like one's sister).

Some of Alves' chapters take the form of a dialogue with such thinkers and seekers as Durkheim, Marx, Freud and Feuerbach. But the dialogue is carried out with feet firm on the ground, i.e. from the standpoint of the two-fold discrepancies mentioned above that he tries to resolve The result of the dialogue is the affirmation of the prophetic relevance of the insights of these thinkers, both as denunciation of the "status quo" and the "religious opium" and as annunciation of the indispensability and the dynamic potential of religion for society. This dialogue also indicates the method Alves uses — an open-ended search for the meaning of religion, flowing from the *sangam* of experience, theology and the social sciences

Greg D'Costa, S J

Motherhood and God. By Margaret Hebblethwaite. *London Geoffrey Chapman*, 1984 Pp 147 £ 3 95

The author states that "(the) book is about finding God in motherhood, and finding motherhood in God", going on to say that she believes "there is only one starting point for such a project, and that is human experience "

These are valid points, and indeed commendable Too often theologians, especially the First World variety, tend to turn theology into highly abstract verbal exercises As Hebblethwaite herself puts it " one tried hard to keep one's intellectual purity by not letting anything slip out that might indicate that one actually believed in what one was talking about You could not substitute piety for argument" (pp 124, 125)

One could appreciate this book as an attempt to reconsecrate the human body, more specifically the female while pregnant, birthing nursing Too often Christianity seems to be a religion "above the neck" only, as if the rest of the human body was there only to support the head, but otherwise to be ignored in polite conversation and certainly in theology Women's work in bearing, nurturing and raising children has often been overlooked as an integral part, if not the mainstay, of the nation's economy — in every sense of the word *oikonomia* Therefore, H 's efforts to "make motherhood at the same time more real and more Christian " and "to show how God is the answer to all our searchings even here, in our motherhood, where we have not yet deeply sought her" are certainly valuable — in *her* context

As an Asian feminist theologian, I must say I find it very difficult to see what contribution this book could make to theologians whose horizon is not blocked by "heaps of dirty nappies" but by broken bones and bloody bodies! whose crises do not consist of coping with "child monsters" (whose violence and defiance are but the product of the mother's over-indulgence) but of fighting adult monsters, whose violence and defiance of common decency results in the deaths of millions of children. Child prostitution, child slavery, infant mortality — has H never heard of them ? Is H so comfortable at (God) her Mother's breast, so "quiet in the union with God.. the greatest possible intimacy with our true mother" (p. 118), that the suffering and despair of *other* mothers, *other* children, are of no interest to her ?

All through the book, I was aware of a painful lack of concern for almost anything which fell outside H 's snug (and smug) little circle In Chapter 8 ("A crisis in mothering") she presents seven pages (49-55) describing her little son's thoroughly unpleasant behaviour (of which she and her husband were "secretly proud and delighted", p. 53) shortly after the birth of her second child Her inability to discipline the little boy is the "crisis" And in the next chapter (9 "Continuing difficulties") she treats the reader to another seven pages of a long and banal description how "difficult" it was to get her two small children to accompany her on a few simple errands in Rome One sentence stuck in my mind "One is prepared for a certain number of disasters, but if more goes wrong it can be difficult to survive" (p 63) To put "disaster" in terms of (undisciplined) children losing their toys, bickering with one another, fouling themselves, and being generally uncooperative, and to worry about one's "survival" in circumstances which, after all, one had created oneself, does reveal a peculiar outlook H seems to put her domestic crises on the same level as the death march of many a Kampuchean mother It is not surprising, then that H dismisses "the refugee problem" in a short paragraph (p 83)— in which she nevertheless manages to mention the fact that "one of our best friends ran the Jesuit Refugee Service"; that she mentions the "self-evidently horrific" human suffering in Calcutta in a tone reminiscent of "there but for the grace of God go I"; and that she even succeeds

in portraying the shooting of Archbishop Oscar Romero as something which happens in "countries where the Church (sic) was persecuted".

H.'s experience is that of the more or less comfortable British middle-class. Hence, one should not be startled that she speaks of Heaven as "getting home after walking miles through the cold and wet and dark during a bus strike" (p 87). It does not seem to occur to her that bus strikers picketing in the cold and wet and dark, too, are God's children. She also speaks vaguely of embarrasment in the face of the manifest poverty of the world (p 86), little seeming to realise that she need not moan over living conditions in (Africa's ? Asia's ?) "mud huts", the slums of Birmingham and Liverpool being a little closer to home

What appalled me was the fact that she put "battered wives" and frustrated mothers on the same level. "There are refuges for battered wives, where in extreme situations they can find a breathing space and feel totally secure But as yet there are no bolt-holes where mothers can run and leave their children" (p. 66) H.'s argument is that "then how much would be saved on battered-baby hospital bills"

I have been involved myself in the education of children in Europe and I know how frustrating it can be to take care of small children But normally, one manages not to confuse overindulgence with love, and is able to apply a certain amount of discipline, which actually does *not* make one lose the child's affection (the reason so many parents are afraid to be strict) but helps the child in its growth toward responsibility and fulfilment of its true potential Discipline is often misunderstood as "corporal punishment". In fact a disciple follows the example given to her/him Child abuse is the result of the parent's immaturity and other factors are secondary

If H had only done more work with women's groups, or seen the Canadian film "A far cry from home" (1981), or the earlier British "Cathy come home", she would realise how naive it is to suppose that a battered wife can ever "feel totally secure"— as long as she *is* a wife, i e. under the power of the aggressive husband The only solution to being a battered wife is simply to stop being a wife, whereas the solution to being an immature mother is not to stop being a mother.

I suppose the book is daring in the circles it is obviously directed at: unabashedly mentioning birth-control, the actual birth-process, the less pleasant aspects of rearing children, and the consistent use of the pronoun "She" for God. However, the style is really often more suited to a chatty column in *Woman's Weekly* : "...if all else has really failed (H. refers to keeping baby quiet), the best thing is to push the baby to the end of the garden where you can't hear it and then not feel guilty. Unfortunately, the neighbours may hear it" (p 37). And. "All these things (H. having used 50 lines to describe the preparations for a typical consumerist Christmas) are indeed an advent penance of a real, physical human kind; they are the ways mothers put themselves out to show the importance of Jesus' coming in their lives" (pp 92, 93).

There is, throughout, a consumerist approach to life. For example "Four weeks later the Pope (John Paul I) died again. This time, I thought, let us all go I had been disappointed to miss the last event, and had promised myself to go the next time..." (p 49).

No wonder, then, that the second part of the book (pp 97-139) also deals with prayer, sacrament and theology in a similar vein "Prayer in the home" is too much centered on the *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius, and therefore would not be of much use to women without ex-Jesuit husbands, or access to Jesuit friends The Eucharist is perceived in a very privatised cultic way, one which is rather hard to take for theologians who see it as integral to human liberation. Baptism, in H 's own words, "It is not that I believe in Limbo, but that I feel all is not quite well until the child has joined the family of God" (p. 113) Here I am tempted to paraphrase C S Song "If we call God our Mother, does it mean that to all others She is a Step-Mother ?"

The theology is shallow, certainly not living up to what one would expect from a book bearing this title On pp. 75-76, H does attempt to describe "the suffering God", but not very theologically. There is an implied fatalism ("it had to be this way"); also, a disturbing nuance of polytheism ("God let Jesus be tortured and killed.. there is no threshold of grief that she cannot have known in seeing her innocent and dearly loved child nailed up to die")

H. does not seem to be able to take the leap from her own sheltered and privilege circle (as many Asian theo-

logians of my acquaintance have managed to do) to apply her faith experience to "the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ" in its most dynamic sense. H. claims that "there are not many mothers among the Catholic saints," implying a lack of role models. It is a pity she overlooked Elizabeth of Hungary, a high-born princess, who used her wealth and privilege in such o way that she is remembered for her compassion for the poor. Even today, in the German Democratic Republic, her life's story — especially "The Miracle of the Roses" — is told through the paintings in the picture gallery at Wartburg where she lived most of her life I had the feeling that the book was, in a way, a kind of show of power from the little girl who failed to impress her "nunny mothers" at convent school (pp 3-10) and, having failed to set Reverend Mother on fire (a feat her son's godmother had managed, p 9), managed to marry an ex-priest, and embark on "studies that are usually more or less reserved to priests and sisters" (p 127)

To H. God is "a cooing mother making inarticulate noises — sweet to the taste" (p 131) The righteousness of God is entirely missing here The wholeness of the Godhead is impaired: cf Exodus 34 6 where Yahweh proclaims her "maternal" attributes of being "merciful and gracious" with the statement that she will "by no means clear the guilty".

The motherhood of God implies the childhood of the human being H.'s God is very much the Breast-Mother, who is reluctant to wean her children (H herself did not wean her oldest child until she was half-way through her second pregnancy — p 35) The child therefore seems locked forever in the oral stage

Marianne KATOPPO

A Christological Catechism. New Testament Answers By Joseph A FITZMYER, S S *New York/Ramsey, Paulist Press*, 1982 Pp vii-160 $ 4 95

This fine book consists of two parts. The first part contains twenty questions about Jesus, of contemporary importance, with brief and clear answers based on the evidence of the New Testament, principally the Gospels The answers would represent at least the consensus of major Catholic New Testament scholarship This section is followed by an article written by the author as a commentary on the *Instruction of the Biblical Commission on the Historical Truth of the Gospels*. The author's English translation of the actual text of this important instruction is included, as well as the appropriate paragraph of the conciliar document *Dei Verbum*, which has incorporated the core ideas of the instruction into its teaching on Divine Revelation and the study of Scripture The usefulness of the book is further extended by the scriptural texts and subject indices and a select bibliography.

To indicate the value of the book we can group the questions treated The historicity of the Gospels, their nature, purpose and the type of knowledge they provide are the subject matter of Qs 1-4 The answers could most profitably be read in conjunction with the text of the Instruction and the enlightening commentary There are a series of questions about the meaning of major aspects of the Gospels The Kingdom of God (5), Sayings-Parables-Sermon on the Mount (6), and Miracles (7) These are followed by enquires about specific events Jesus' baptism (8), Jesus' words to Peter, Mt 16, 16-18 (9), the Last Supper (10), the Resurrection (16) the Ascension (17) and about who were responsible for Jesus' death (11) The author has included problematic questions· the Virgin birth (13) the Brothers-sisters of Jesus (14), Did Jesus claim to be God ? (17), and Did the initial proclamation state unambiguously that Jesus was the Son of God ? (19) The final group of questions are about the interpretations of Jesus· Are there different Christologies in the New Testament ? (12), Jesus' titles (18) and contemporary NT scholarship's understanding of Jesus as Redeemer of the world (20).

We have listed the questions to indicate how relevant is this short book to the concerns of many Christians who are baffled or upset by much NT interpretation or interested in understanding more recent insights into the Gospels

Many of the questions apart from Qs 1-4 are related to the historical character of the Gospels At times readers, grateful for the clarity and precise information given in the answers, would want a more definite form of answer, themselves unable to come to a definite conclusion Careful attention needs to be given to the actual answers, the nuanced information given and the background provided in the Instruction and commentary. The unease will remain in some cases (the question about responsibility for Jesus' death, the Virgin birth, the brothers-sisters of Jesus...). The nature of the

book has to be kept in mind, a catechism and not a detailed study of each question.

The book is an education and so at times a challenge, to the reader's present stage in understanding which may need to change and mature. In this process there can be crisis. A constant feature of the answers is the emphasis upon the specific character of the various NT writings, the specific individuality of each Gospel's interpretation and proclamation of Jesus and the purpose of these writings. The answers provide reliable, concise and clear information on areas which are basic to our understanding of the NT, especially the Gospels and therefore the person and mission of Jesus Christ — a Christological catechism based on the original sources of our Faith.

In India we would look for more specific questions, also on areas like religious pluralism (see Q. 20), culture and the interpretation of Jesus, and the Gospels and Social Justice with the question of the basis for liberation theology in the Gospels.

As with all of Fitzmyer's writings, this book is highly recommendable to all types of readers.

P. M MEAGHER, S J.

The Practice of Jesus. By Hugo ECHEGARAY *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis and Melbourne, Dove Com.*, 1984 Pp. xxii-122 $ 7.95

Hugo Echegaray, a promising Peruvian priest, friend and colleague of Gustavo Gutiérrez, was expected to collect the mantle of the father of Liberation Theology. An untimely death in 1979 when Hugo was only 39 years old cut short these hopes. Not however before he had articulated some of his thoughts on Jesus and the poor in this book which he completed four months before he died. Though the only book completed by him, we find here already a mature theological thought on what the Gospel is about and on the implications of the practice of Jesus for those who want to follow him. Before writing this book Hugo published a number of articles from 1974 in the Peruvian theological journal *Paginas*, which he edited from 1976 to 1979, and in the journal of the Catholic University of Peru in Lima, where he was professor of theology. These articles have been collected in a volume under the title *Anunciar el Reino* (262 pages) published by CEP, Lima.

The word "practice" in the title of the book under review must be read as a "historical category" with a very specific meaning: "In its broadest and most classical sense 'practice' means activity that is done in full freedom and that confronts, redirects, and transforms a given reality" (13). Perhaps the same idea is more often expressed by the cognate neologism "praxis". Echegaray's work is really a Christology, but a Christology that is not so much concerned with the metaphysics of Jesus (although it fully accepts the Chalcedonian faith), nor considers exclusively the death and resurrection as the only theological dense events in the story of Jesus. The center of attention of the author is the (public) life of Jesus, and the theological implications for discipleship of the stand Jesus took in the concrete society in which he lived. It is in the light of that life that the meaning of the death and resurrection has to be discovered. Much of the effort of the book consists in analysing the political, economic, social and religious components of the society in which Jesus lived and its various groups and tendencies. The stand that Jesus took in that situation brings out the contents of what he meant when he announced the Kingdom of God. Because therefore the interest is history, the primary (though not exclusive) biblical source the author uses is Luke (and Acts). Echegaray, however, does not remain at the surface of the "actions" of Jesus: he tries to delve into the heart of his human personality. He finds it to be characterised by a supreme freedom. The question that arises from his life and that of the early Church is how to live the reality of the Kingdom of God in a situation of diaspora and anti-Kingdom values (the Roman Empire). The question is relevant to us also.

In this book one will find an authentic expression of the liberation theology that avoids the dangers mentioned in the recent Instruction from the Vatican. It is not a secularising theology. Like the Lord's prayer, it places the holiness of the Name of the God of the Kingdom before the coming of that Kingdom of God here on earth and in heaven. Gustavo Gutiérrez' 14-page synthesis of the theological thought of Hugo prefaces this useful and solid contribution to the collection on liberation theology and spirituality which the Christian world is grateful to Orbis for publishing in English.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

The Holy Spirit. By Eduard SCHWEIZER. *London, SCM Press*, 1981. Pp. 138. £ 3.95.

This very informative book on the Holy Spirit, translated from the German, is by the author of the long, scholarly, philological and theological article on *Pneuma* in the TDNT. In this book he begins his study by considering the contemporary Western ideas and discussions about the presence and activity of the Spirit in the ministry, the Bible and the human heart. This leads the author to study the biblical experience of the Spirit and the pictorial language used to describe the experience. The author analyses briefly the witness of the Old Testament (ch. 2) and the Spirit in the intertestamental Jewish writings (ch 3). The longest chapter examines in detail the New Testament witness to the Spirit (ch 4) In each of these chapters he considers the biblical material under four headings the strangeness of the Spirit, his presence in creation, in our knowing, and finally the Spirit and the final consummation of history In a final chapter "What then is the Spirit ?" the author outlines briefly the different accents of John, Paul and Luke and in more detail describes the characteristics of the Spirit's presence receptive fidelity to Jesus, the Spirit as "God beyond our control", freedom, fellowship, his active guidance, and the Spirit as ensuring that we remain open to God and his future. The many headings within each chapter offset the omission of subject and scriptural indices

As a study of the Holy Spirit in Scripture this is a very competent work One feature of the study is the way the author traces the evolution in the understanding of the Spirit and focuses upon questions which arise in the OT and Intertestamental periods At the end of most sections within each chapter the writer either asks, "What does this mean ?", or gives an evaluation of the development of thought at that point The fact that the writer has organized his study around four areas, relates his biblical study to the present experience in the Church, and concludes with a final chapter gathering together his insights for the present, makes the study interesting and pertinent.

The longer part of the book is the study of the Spirit in the NT (pp. 46-134) His treatment of the unobstrusive yet central place of the Spirit in Jesus' life and teaching, and the manner in which the early Church thought about the relationship of Jesus to the Spirit is sensitive to the scriptural texts. In the life of the Christian community he describes the way the Spirit is "ever a stranger", the source of new creation, and how the Spirit enables the community to proclaim the Gospel, reveals the crucified to the community, and is the source of the life of Christ in the community and its various expressions of life.

Schweizer studies the different aspects of the experience of the Spirit, aware of the differences between the Synoptic witness, Paul and John. He gives special attention to Luke-Acts. He does not present us with a potpourri of biblical texts and themes. Each author's experience stands out with its own richness and clarity.

This book is indeed a very rich study of the Spirit and could form the basis for understanding and discerning the relationship between the biblical experience and the presence of the Spirit in Indian traditions. The book would be a welcome addition to libraries in many parishes and religious houses which lack any good study on the Spirit, the forgotten Presence in our lives

P. MEAGHER, S J

Moral Theology

Guide to Christian Living. By George V LOBO, S J *Westminster, Maryland, Christian Classics, Inc*, 1984. Pp. xiii-455 $ 16 95.

This volume is an expanded American edition of *Christian Living According to Vatican II* published in India in 1980 (cf VIDYAJYOTI, 1980, p 500) The American edition has the subtitle *A New Compendium of Moral Theology* It has been published in the *Christian Classics* series The present volume has an added final chapter on Reconciliation to complete, as it were, the preceding chapter on Sin. The Indian edition, had ended with the chapter on Sin The volume has a good updated bibliography and subject index Through the American edition this valuable book will hopefully reach a wider readership

S AROKIASAMY, S J

Evangelization and Justice. By John WALSH. *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books*, 1982 Pp xii-107 $ 5 95.

John Walsh, a Maryknoller and one-time missionary in Japan, probes into the nature of ministry and evangelisation He begins with a diagnosis of cultural Christianity since the mid-sixties. In the discussion, Walsh uses Fowler's six

stages of faith, based on Kohlberg's stages of moral development, to diagnose where believers of cultural Christianity stand and what they are challenged to.

The six stages of faith maturity according to Fowler are the following: stage one lasts upto six years from infancy. We receive the faith from our parents informally, picking up parental attitudes towards God, Christ, prayer, etc. The second stage lasts from seven to twelve In this stage we receive the faith from a parent or a sister or a brother or a religious teacher. People pass on the "stories" of Christianity to us the oncoming generation Stage three begins at about 13 and may extend right through adulthood In this stage we receive our faith from our environment or group. There emerges a sense of belonging to the group Group loyalty marks this stage In stage four one begins to think of one's faith as one's own responsibility. "We have to look Christ Jesus in the eye and account for our own lives" (p. 5) We begin to assume responsibility for our own faith, actions and value system The fifth stage can be attained at about 30 In this stage one can learn what is good in opposite polarities When we reach this stage we are liberated persons We can deal with paradox and dialectic logic and intuition, loyalty and independence, and so on In stage six, which we can reach at about 38, though only a few of us do actually reach it, we are able to resolve polarities A stage six the person is very much a God lover, very much a people lover, a pioneer, indeed of the type of a St Paul

People of "cultural Christianity" tend to get stuck in stage 3 of Fowler, seeking to hide themselves in the womb of this stage even when they are challenged to came out to stage four, in which they have to be responsible for their own faith Walsh observes that some of our seminaries and convents still offer stage 3 sanctuaries Ministers must know what is happening to believers so that they guide them fruitfully

Walsh then proceeds to discuss how in the changing world of today believers can be helped to evolve and grow from stage 3, cultural Christianity, to stages 4 and 5 He points out that only some move out of stage 3 and begin to perceive that concern for social justice and peace are demands of faith The majority of the cultural Christians continue to face the problems of justice in terms of a stage 3 response: relief, aid to the poor, etc. Only if we help people to move to the higher stages, shall we succeed in making them involved in issues of justice and peace. Only people in stage four will be attuned to the structural dimensions of justice. In this stage a shift in the understanding of "virtue and vice" takes place

After exploring the implications for justice and human rights of these stages of the development of faith Walsh goes on to examine their implications for the future of Christian community. He lists the positive traits of faith in stage four that could build up the future Christian community. He then discusses the successful evangeliser who in his ministry becomes an "enabler" of growth and builds up new stages of understanding and judgement, culminating in a personalisation of the faith. As people move up to stage 4 of faith, the ways, models and content of evangelisation change The question asked are no more those of stage 3, cultural Christianity Mature Christianity and a fuller evangelisation include the ministry of justice A useful appendix on the conscientization of the Church makes this ministry clear

S AROKIASAMY, S.J

Understanding the Encyclical on Birth Control. By Felix M. PODIMATTAM, O.F M Cap *Bangalore*, *Asian Trading Corporation*, 1982 Pp 141

Fr Felix Podimattam takes stock of the moral theological debate that has been going on on the teachings of *Humanae Vitae* (H V) on contraception. Nearly 15 years after H V, one has the advantage of distance from the heated debate, dissent and strong, sometimes fundamentalistic, defence of the encyclical, and can come to an objective evaluation of the reasons for and against the papal teaching on birth control Fr Felix examines briefly the nature and authority of encyclicals and points out that they are the exercise of the ordinary magisterium of the Pope. In the same chapter, the author gives a summary of the history of the debate on contraception until 1968, based on the writings of John Horgan, Benedict Ashley and Kevin O'Rourke

In Chapter 2 the author discusses "the misunderstandings of the unloving critics" of the encyclical. While treating of their dissenting critical views, he highlights the gains we have from H.V. in the understanding of morality, the language about and insights into family

life and marriage. The loveless criticism of some critics seems to ignore so many valuable teachings of the encyclical.

In Chapter 3, Fr Felix examines the "misunderstandings of the uncritical defenders of Humanae Vitae". As uncritical enthusiasts they argue for the supposed "infallibility" of H.V. without caring for the ecclesiological criteria in the tradition of the Church, and for the testimony of some bishops' conferences clearly showing that H.V is "no infallible dogmatic declaration" Though the encyclical declares without ambiguity the "objective evil of contraception", the same uncritical defenders of H V tend to affirm dogmatically that the last word of the magisterium on contraception has been uttered, and fail to note the inadequacy of its language and moral reasoning, its prophetic nature, or the demands of the pastoral realities The history of the magisterium testifies to changes in Church teaching, including in moral questions Fr Felix gives a number of interesting examples to illustrate this, e g usury, religious liberty, etc

Historical information on the evolving pattern of the magisterium is abundantly provided. We need to reckon with the historicity of moral precepts, imperatives and teachings, in so far as they are related to the concrete historical reality of the people, without slipping into relativism

Regarding non-infallible teaching, there is room for legitimate dissent in the Church and a history of such dissent Rigid positions that tolerate no dissent by even informed and responsible Christians and theologians interpret such dissent as disloyalty, and refuse to recognise the nuances of a teaching and their pastoral interpretations and applications If the Word of God (Scripture) considered as *norma normans* of faith needs exegetical explanation and hermeneutical actualisation for its meaningfulness to our lives, much more so the word of the magisterium, which is only *norma normata*, needs interpretation and explanation In the last chapter, the author outlines briefly some pastoral considerations, especially as to how to help not only the dissenting penitent, the perplexed penitent, the doubting penitent, but also the assenting penitent. Pastoral wisdom helps us discover moral truth in the concrete reality of the people's lives. The book of Fr Felix is not a purely academic evaluation of the post H.V debate but a pastorally sensitive book that combines great respect for the precious value of the magisterium and compassion for people in need of help and growth in moral maturity.

S. AROKIASAMY, S.J.

Dialogue

Meaning Across Cultures. By Eugene A. NIDA and William D. REYBURN, *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books*, 1981. Pp. iv-90 $ 5.95.

Two outstanding Bible translators handle here the difficult problem of the cultural adaptation involved in rendering the Hebrew and Greek texts of the Bible into different languages, with attention to differences of cultural context and values The authors also study the principles that govern faithfulness and accuracy in making the message of the Bible in translations intelligible across cultural frontiers

In a language of New Guinea spoken by people who have no knowledge of sheep and who prize pigs, a Bible translator who would substitute "shepherd" with "pig-herder" would produce a text intelligible and adapted to the culture of this people, but many would reject such an adaptation, because it conflicts with the over-all cultural world of the Bible where pigs are seen as unclean animals The tendency to retain Biblical figures of speech and cultural symbols does produce its own misunderstandings The point is, therefore, that communication of meaning across cultures calls for a certain adjustment in the form of the message Strict word-for-word translation tends to distort the meaning of the original message in the source language The authors of the book examine what communication means Communication through translation moves between the source, the message and the receptor The complex relations and levels of meaning involved are examined by the authors Culturally adapted translations have their own problems, as shown above Translators have to study not only the features of the source-language in their symbolic significance, but also the distinctive features of the receptor language In ch 7 the authors provide supplementary information on Bible translation, guidelines for legitimate textual adjustments as published by the United Bible Societies, and suggestions for marginal notes. The book provides also a select bibliography related to the topic. The publication is valuable for translators of the Bible and for theologians engaged in creating indigenous theologies.

A. AROKIASAMY, S.J.

Christianity in Assam and Inter-Faith Dialogue. A Study on the Modern Religious Movements in North East India. By Mathew MUTTUMANA. *Indore, Satprakashan Press, Pune, Ishvani Kendra*, 1984. Pp. x-300. Pb Rs. 85. Cloth Rs. 95.

Christianity in North East India has been built up by Catholics, Anglicans, Presbyterians, Lutherans and other smaller denominations. These independent churches took root among a people already divided by castes and independent tribes. Denominational frontiers have largely followed along the caste and tribal lines of division. "Thus", says the author, "the disunity in Christendom took a new dimension".

Although the book is primarily concerned with the inter-faith dialogue between Hindu religious movements and Christianity in Assam, the first three of its five parts contain a systematic and rather comprehensive history of the growth of Christianity in the area. The origins are found in the efforts of the missionaries of the Paris Mission Seminary to reach Tibet through Assam, and, later, in the work of American Baptist missionaries among the Shan tribes as a preparation for a mission in China.

Part 2 presents the history of the growth of the churches, dependent on the political vagaries of the colonial period. One is struck by the persisting efforts, the various methods of evangelization, the way of facing difficulties, and the successes and failures of the missionaries from so many churches. The Baptists worked first among the Hindus of Assam, but with little success. They turned then to the tribals both of the plains and the hills, such as the Mikirs, the Kacharis, the Garos, the Chotanagpurian immigrant labour, and the Nagas. The Garos and the Chotanagpurian tribals were comparatively quick in accepting Christianity. From very slow beginnings we have come today to the stage where the majority of the Christians of the hill tribes are Baptists.

The Catholics were late to enter this mission field in a significant way, and among them the mission often changed hands. The French missionaries failed to reach Tibet and withdrew from Assam. The area was reunited to the diocese of Calcutta but was entrusted to the Vicar Apostolic of Dacca, which was under the care of the Holy Cross Society. Then it was given over to the Milan missionaries, whose presence lasted longer. Later the Salvatorians took over the mission and succeeded in establishing the local Church with some schools and charitable institutions. But due to political developments they were deported from India. The Belgian Jesuits were sent to Assam as caretakers of the established church. Finally the Holy See sent the Society of Don Bosco (the Salesian Fathers) who for years have given of their very best to this large mission area.

Part 3 deals with the establishment of the indigenous churches. It first explains the theologies and ecclesiologies behind the mission work of the various churches and this prepares the way for part 4 which studies ecumenism in the area. This part first presents some important ecumenical events in India such as the early attempts at unity by the St Thomas Christians, the formation of the CSI and the CNI, and discusses then how a "Church of North East India" could be formed as a step towards an inter-religious dialogue or the wider ecumenism. The author is aware of the main obstacles to a united Church of North East India and discusses the points where agreement could be reached, like scripture and tradition, the church and the sacraments.

Part 5 finally comes to the question of inter-faith dialogue between Hindus and Christians in Assam. As the author says, this dialogue is necessary if the proclamation of the Gospel is aimed at the human beings in their totality, with their faith traditions and cultures. The areas of dialogue are the prevalent doctrines of the main Hindu sects of Assam as well as the pre-sectarian religions and cultural life of the people. Neo-Vaishnavism, founded in Assam by Guru Sankaradeva, is very strong. Shaktism and Tantrism are briefly and competently presented. The Ahoms, once the followers of animinism, are today the Hindus in Assam. The author presents the Ahom cosmogony with reference to the story of Genesis as a point of dialogue. The chapter on Christian worship and Shakti sadhana is, in the author's own words, "an attempt to expose the relevant aspects of the Christian worship in order to come to dialogue with the Shakti worship which is a major one in Assam." He also explores the common elements of the Vaishnava bhakti and the Christian faith in their quest for final fulfilment. The Hindu understanding of avataras and the Christian doctrine of the incarnation of Jesus are compared, and the idea of worship in Hinduism and the liturgical

practices of Christianity are shown to be a promising area of dialogue.

The book covers too vast a field of history, theology and comparative religion to go into any depths. But it provides handy information for any one working in North East India It gives a good idea of Christianity in the region and of the religious tenets of both Hinduism and the various Christian denominations at work there

Boniface D'Souza, S J

Islam

Jamāl al-Din al-Afghāni. A Muslim Intellectual. By Anwar Moazzam *New Delhi, Concept Publ Company*, 1984. Pp xvi + 157 Rs. 90 $ 18

Jamāl al-Din al-Afghāni (1838/39-1897) is one of the key figures of nineteenth-century Islam Any study of contemporary Islamic movements and trends inevitably leads in one way or another to him, "a source of inspiration for Muslim intellectuals, both conservative and modern, as well as the Muslim political elite of present day, in general" (xiii) Certainly there is no dearth of detailed studies of his biography, political actions and ideas, and rare is the book dealing with one or other aspect of modern Islam that does not give an account of al-Afghani in its proper place

All the same Moazzam is correct in stating that "no systematic study of his intellectual personality has yet been attempted" In this revised version of his 1963 Aligarh Ph D thesis Moazzam therefore sets out to reconstruct "the broad intellectual framework which he (al-Afghāni) offered for the urgently needed redefining of the relationship between Islam and the changing world" (xvi)

He deals in five chapters with al-Afghani's thought on "religion", "individual and society", "moral values", his "refutation of the Naturalists" and the "unorthodoxy of al-Afghani's thought." The epilogue singles out as the overall distinctive feature of his thought his transfer of emphasis from abstract theory on Islam to Muslim society as such. "It was the material (political, social and economic) decline and stagnation of Muslim peoples which led him to re-examine the philosophical content of those Islamic concepts which governed the cultural aspects of life" (125). Hence al-Afghāni was interested in those beliefs and concepts which are directly or indirectly related to social realities, and not in Islamic metaphysics, mysticism or purely philosophical issues Al-Afghāni traced the decline to the neglect of true Islamic principles during the previous five or six centuries Hence his prescription for a political and cultural rennaissance was to discover the true fundamentals of Islam

Moazzam's study is based on the extant primary sources The synopsis of al-Afghāni's life and activities and the selective bibliography he provides at the end are most helpful. An introductory essay discussing critically the writing on al-Afghāni to date would have greatly facilitated the effort of the author to re-establish a true balance in interpretation We find in the present work, on any given topic, quotations from the most diverse writings of al-Afghāni given side by side, but the reader hardly gets an idea of how, where and under which influences, responding to which concrete challenges — intellectual or otherwise — al-Afghāni's main ideas developed His interaction with contemporary events and ideas (or authors), Muslim or Western, is not touched upon For this reason we are not able to grasp the exact original meaning of the key terms which surely must have undergone important changes in the course of al-Afghāni's life Finally, the reader fails to get an impression of the overall temper of al-Afghāni's peculiar diction and mode of arguing Extracts of important passages in trans-lation would have helped in this

Our critical remarks amount to saying only this: while we still have to wait for a full and convincing intellectual portrait of this great militant intellectual of early modern Islam, the author's present study represents a significant step in this direction

Christian W. Troll, S.J

Cum permissu Superiorum

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Editorial

One year ago this month the S Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued its Instruction on Certain Aspects of the "Theology of Liberation", although the text was released to the general public only in early September The Instruction aroused consternation and even alarm in some quarters of the Church, and an almost infantile rejoicing in other people who thought that the liberation theology had finally been condemned. Now at the distance of one year, we can take a more objective view of the document and be helped by it in our theological reflection

A dispassionate reading shows clearly that the document is not a condemnation of liberation theology as such, much less of its intention. In fact the Instruction starts by acknowledging that "the powerful and almost irressistible aspiration that people have for *liberation* constitutes one of the principal *signs of the times* which the Church has to examine and interpret in the light of the Gospel" (I. 1). This aspiration, the Instruction continues, shows a new implicit awareness that people live with human dignity, a theme that derives from the Bible Liberation and the biblical anthropology of the human being as *imago Dei* go hand in hand Hence liberation is presented as an essentially *Christian* theme (III). L Boff was right when he maintained that the Vatican document is a basic approval of the theology of liberation [1]

By itself an Instruction is not primarily a doctrinal document, as a Decree would be, or a Papal Encyclical. Instructions are expressions of the executive function of the Roman congregations, and are meant to interpret a law, or the whole Christian law, with a view to favouring the right *execution* of the same. (Cf. R. Naz, in *Dictionnaire de droit canonique*, IV, p. 213. Also CIC c 34) In our case the explicit function of this Instruction is clearly stated in the paragraph quoted at the beginning of Fr D'Lima's article (p. 364). a pastoral warning against deviations, real or possible, so that the Church may be free "to *struggle*, by her own means, for the defense and advancement of the *rights* of mankind, specially the *poor*" (end of Introduction,

stress added). On the other hand the Instruction itself calls on the resources of theologians and thinkers in the Church to continue the ongoing reflection on the social teaching of the Church, for "this teaching is by no means closed" (XI. 12).

There are indeed those in the Church who would like this Instruction to be the final word, closing any further theological reflection on the problem created by the unequal distribution of wealth and the consequent degradation of human dignity. In so doing they go against the clear expectations of the Instruction itself. There are also those who would utterly reject the value of the Instruction as they feel it proceeds from an incompetent and distant organism in the Church. Such is not the reaction of a Leonardo Boff or a Gustavo Gutiérrez. The latter said in September last year, during a press conference in Madrid:

> As a Christian and a priest I consider that this text is addressed to me because it proceeds from an authority in the magisterium of the Church Therefore I must take into account the critique and the observations of the Instruction. Regarding its observations I must add that the important ones have no relation to my writings
>
> When one is part of a Church, with all its human aspects but also with the presence of grace and the Spirit in her, one accepts the consequences of belonging to this community On our side there is always an openness to explain, make clear, deepen and eventually correct what we have said with every good intention We had always this attitude, from the earliest texts we wrote on this subject
>
> We do not believe that anybody has a monopoly of the truth so that one cannot learn from others We try to understand what is objected to and why This is always our attitude and I think it is most valid and most fruitful I consider myself a member of this Church This is very well known in my own country We are open to dialogue and to improvement There are differences of opinion, and this is normal in the Church We try to understand and see the reasons of these differences To speak of fidelity to the poor people is no way in contrary to fidelity to the Church
>
> I think we are coming to a critical moment The circumstances are difficult and also, why deny it, painful at the personal level, because many of us feel identified with the Church and if anything hurts it is precisely this kind of questioning But at a moment such as this one may have an opportunity to grow and to deepen one's thinking on these themes and one's trend of thought and vocabulary, and to make things clearer There are difficult points but I think we shall be able to come to something very important for the life of the Church, for the Christian communities, for whole episcopal conferences" (cf *Páginas* 65-66, Nov-Dec 1984, pp 35-6)

The Instruction is surely not a systematic theological study of the issues it raises. It promises a more detailed and positive document on the "vast theme of Christian freedom and liberation in its own

right". But some of the implications of this Instruction raise serious theological problems: two histories, sacred and profane (IX. 3), the universality of Christian love seen in opposition to the struggle for and by the poor (IX. 7), the apparent opposition implied in the "radical newness" of the NT vis-a-vis the OT (X. 7), the insistence on personal aspect of sin without a corresponding importance to be given to the sinful structures, the insistence on poverty of spirit forgetting the Lucan version of the Beatitudes, and the omission of the messianic text in Lk 4:18, etc.

However it is not the document as such that has caused much concern and anxiety in a great deal of the theological and ecclesial world of today (an anxiety that took an unacceptable expression in the visit of the Pope to Holland) Most theological journals and even popular Christian periodicals have expressed a deep concern at the callous way in which theologians are treated in recent years in the Church Even 10 bishops of Brazil considered the recent silencing of Boff for an indeterminate time "not quite evangelical, an attempt against human rights, and on the rights of investigation of a theologian, a counter-witness to Christian freedom and love, a disturbance to the development of our churches, and harmful to our episcopal Conference." (*La Croix*, 13 June 1985, p 7). Is the Church losing the new Christian sensitivity it had acquired in the Second Vatican Council ?

VIDYAJYOTI presents this month a contribution to the dialogue concerning Liberation Theology demanded by the Instruction It represents part of the effort of the Indian theologians and thinkers to reflect on some of the issues raised by going back to the authentic sources. As the core of the document seems to bear on the Marxist analysis and the class struggle, it is not surprising that our writers should focus on them. They offer us mature reflections, even when critical They express the same spirit we have seen in the declarations of Gutiérrez They are written from within the Church and with love for the Church, to help towards that maturation which theology needs and which cannot come about without a serious dialogue involving the whole Church and all the churches.

Our contributions come from a biblical scholar, a social scientist and a theologian On a later occasion we hope to touch on some other aspects of the documents, specially the question of the social dimensions of sin, and violence.

Class in the Bible: The Biblical Poor a Social Class?

George M. SOARES-PRABHU, S.J.*

LIBERATION Theology has made at least two significant contributions to contemporary exegesis. It has sensitized exegetes to the social, economic, and political dimension of the Bible, and it has made them aware of the extent to which their supposedly scientific exegesis is inevitably coloured by cultural and class prejudices Neither contribution is specific or new. What we might call *the sociological contribution* was anticipated in early Marxist studies on the Bible, notably Kautsky's study of the origins of Christianity,[1] and was a conspicuous concern of the Chicago school [2] But these remained marginal movements in the world of biblical scholarship, soon to be overwhelmed by the wave of "existentialist interpretation" with its highly privatized understanding of the biblical message as a call to personal decision It is after the appearance of liberation theology, that the sociological study of the Bible begins in earnest [3] And while not all (nor even most) of the works which this has produced are liberationist, or have been directly inspired by liberation theology, the present burgeoning of interest in the social world of the Bible owes much more, I suspect, to the impetus of liberation theology than exegetes would care to admit

*Fr George SOARES-PRABHU, Professor of Scripture at the Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune, and one of the leading theologians of India, has published many studies of Scripture from a liberation point of view

1. Karl KAUTSKY, *The Foundation of Christianity*, London, Allen & Unwin, 1925.

2. Cf Raymond COLLINS, *Introduction to the New Testament*, London, SCM, 1983, 53, for a brief but informative note on the Chicago School, and Kenneth CAUTHEN in his Introduction to Shailer MATHEWS, *Jesus on Social Institutions*, Philadelphia, Fortress, 1971, lii-lxxi, for a discussion of the school in the light of Mathews' work

3 For a competent if pedestrian survey of recent sociological study of the New Testament, cf Derek TIDBALL, *An Introduction to the Sociology of the New Testament*, Exeter, Paternoster, 1983 The work is weakened by the author's overconservative stance and uncritical literalist approach to the New Testament text More judicious though briefer and a little out of date is Robin SCROGGS, "The Sociological Interpretation of the New Testament · The present State of the Research", *NTS* 26 (1980) 164-79. I know of no similar survey of the sociological study of the Old Testament, though this has been studied more extensively than the New Much information can be gleaned from the articles re-printed in Norman GOTTWALD (ed), *The Bible and Liberation*, New York, Orbis, 1983, 149-336

The *hermeneutical contribution* of liberation theology too — its awareness of the extent to which the class-culture of the reader affects his interpretation of a text — is again part of a general hermeneutical awakening [4] No one today seriously supposes that the exegesis of the Bible even at its most "scientific", is really value-free or wholly 'objective" A totally objective interpretation is no doubt possible for a text made up of *terms* (formulae expressing measurable quantative entities) It is not possible for a text like the Bible, which consists of *words* (linguistic expressions of human experiences) [5] Words inevitably evoke specific resonances in each reader, which are coloured by his personal experiences and shaped by his particular world view. Each reader will thus perceive a text made up of words in his own strictly personal way This insight of modern hermeneutics has of course developed independently of liberation theology What liberation theology has done is to draw attention to the concrete class character of the reader's perception of the biblical text [6]

In the light of liberation theology, then, a topic like "Class in the Bible , poses two distinct questions It raises (1) the sociological question to what extent is the biblical narratives intelligible in terms of class and class struggle ? And it raises (2) the hermeneutical question how far does one s class culture determine one's reading of the biblical text ? Both questions are significant and have been raised by the Instruction on Certain Aspects of the Theology of Liberation, published by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith last year [7] A proper appreciation of the role of class and class struggle in the Bible would require that we thoroughly discuss both, but since limitations of time and space will not allow this, I shall take up the first, the sociological question only, leaving the second the hermeneutical one for another occasion

The aim of this article, then, is to determine how far the history of Israel and of Jesus, as this is told in the Old and the New Testaments, is amenable to a class analysis How far, that is, did the biblical authors

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4 Cf Richard PALMER, *Hermeneutics Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger and Gadamer* ', Evanston, Northwestern Univ Press, 1969, Anthony THISELTON, *The Two Horizons*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1980

5 Raimundo PANIKKAR "Words and Terms", in M OLIVETTI (ed), *Archivio di Filosofia*, Rome, 1980 117-33

6 Cf Juan-Luis SEGUNDO, *The Liberation of Theology*, New York, Orbis, 1976

7 *Instruction on Certain Aspects of the 'Theology of Liberation'* Vatican City, 1984, Sections IX and X For a brief but perceptive comment cf John LANGAN, Rome Targets Liberation Theology, Praxis", *Woodstock Report* 5 (October 1984) 1 & 6, for a well-argued and knowledgeable critique cf Sebastian KAPPEN, "Church, Liberation Theology and Marxism", *Vaidikamitram* XVIII/4 (April 1985) 97-122

understand their history in terms of what we might today call class struggle and class.

Class and class struggle are of course ambiguous terms, variously defined in different sociological schools.[8] But it is the Marxist understanding that is the most pertinent to us, since it is this that has influenced biblical exegesis most extensively. When the categories of class or of class struggle have been used for interpreting the Bible, this has always been done as part of a Marxist analysis. For it is only in a Marxist analysis that these categories play a significant role. Other forms of the sociological study of the Bible do not focus, or do not focus so sharply, on class. To the extent, then, that class is significant for biblical interpretation, it is class understood in the Marxist sense of the term. Understandably, then, it is precisely the alleged use or misuse of class and class struggle understood in this way, that has been singled out by the Instruction on liberation theology for censure.

We use "class", then, in the popularly accepted Marxist understanding of the word, taking it to be a system of social stratification based on the ownership of the means of production. Such stratification divides society into antagonistic groups of those who own the means of production (today, the bourgeoisie) and those who do not (today, the proletariat), and leads inevitably to a class struggle between them. The ultimate outcome of this struggle will be the expropriation of expropriators and the emergence of a classless society where the means of production will be owned by all This is obviously a highly simplified exposition of the Marxist understanding of class — simplified some might say to the point of parody. But it does, I hope, bring out the essential factors we need to keep in mind when we speak of "class" in the Bible

Obviously no detailed study of the relevance of class to the biblical narrative can be attempted within the limits of this article I shall therefore limit myself to exploring a single focal issue, the biblical understanding of the poor. There is much in the Bible to suggest that the poor there are given the same confrontational and creative historical role that Karl Marx assigns to the working class in capitalist society Are the poor in the Bible, then, a class in the Marxist sense ? Can their action in the history of Israel be described as a class struggle ? To what extent can a class analysis be applied to them ?

8. Cf John Desrochers, *Classes in India Today*, Bangalore, Centre for Social Action, 1984, 7-30.

To answer such questions, we shall (a) take a quick look at what the Bible has to say about the poor, and then (b) reflect on this in the light of the Marxist understanding of class.

A. The Poor in the Bible

The poor are a conspicuous and frequently mentioned group in the Bible, which uses a battery of more or less synonymous words to describe them.[9]

(a) The most familiar of these, a word which has deservedly become part of standard Christian language, is *'ānî* or *'ānāw* (plural: *'aniyyîm* or *'anāwîm*) which occured 92 times in the Hebrew Bible and probably underlies most of the 34 occurences of the Greek *ptōchos* (= 'poor, destitute') in the New. The word probably derives from the root *'nh* (II)="to be bent, bowed down, afflicted". It suggests a person who is afflicted and bent, that is, dehumanized, reduced by oppression to a condition of diminished capacity or worth. By extension the word *'ānî*, particularly in its late and secondary form *'ānāw*, has been given a religious meaning and has come to stand for those whom poverty and powerlessness have taught "to bend before God" and place their trust in him alone In this sense *'ānāw* comes close to the 'poor in spirit' (*ptōchoi tō pneumati*) of Matthew's beatitude (Mt 5. 3), an expression which designates those who are wholly dependent on God But this religious connotation given to *'anî/'ānāw* is derived, secondary, and closely dependent on the primary sociological meaning of the word. The poor in spirit are those also who are sociologically poor; for it is precisely the powerless who learn to place their trust in God The religious connotation of the word thus implies the sociological The *'ānî/'ānāw* is thus primarily one who is sociologically poor, that is one who has been brought to a situation of diminished capacity or worth.

(b) Closely associated with *'ānî/'ānāw*, specially in exilic and post-exilic psalms is *'ebyôn* from the root *'bh* (II)="to be willing, to consent". Occurring 61 times in the Hebrew Bible the word is best understood as indicating a person in need. It is sometimes spiritualized so that it can serve as a parallel to *ṣadiq* (='a righteous person') as in Amos 2: 6 and

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9 The analysis of the biblical words on poverty which follows depends heavily on the thorough and painstaking study of Milton SCHWANTES, *Das Recht der Armen*, Frankfurt/Main, Lang, 1977, 16-52, and on the somewhat less detailed but equally perceptive analyses of Jacques DUPONT in his monumental study on the beatitudes of Jesus, *Les Beatitudes, tomes I-III*, Paris, Gabalda, 1969-73, II, 19-51 Cf also Augustine GEORGE, "Poverty in the Old Testament", in Augustin GEORGE *et alii*, *Gospel Poverty*, Chicago, Franciscan Hearld Press, 1977, 3-21.

5: 12; or to *yishrê derek* (="those of upright conduct") as in Psalm 37: 14; but it normally indicates plain material need.

(c) So does *dal* from the root *dll* ="to languish, to be weak, to be little", found 48 times in the Hebrew Bible, frequently as a parallel to *'ānî* (Amos 2, 7; Is 10: 2; 11: 4, Prov 22: 22; Ps 82: 3, Job 34: 28 — where the RSV regularly translates *dal* as "poor" and *'ānî* as "afflicted"), or to *'ebyôn* (Amos 4. 1; 8. 6; Is 14. 30; 25: 4; Prov 14: 31; Ps 113: 7; 1 Sam 2: 8 — with *dal* almost always appearing as "poor" and *'ebyôn* always as "needy"). In its usage in the Bible *dal* keeps its root meaning of being "low, weak, feeble", and so describes people of low social status as opposed to those who are great or noble (*gādôl* — cf. Jer 5. 4f); people of straitened economic means as opposed to those who are wealthy (*'āshir* — cf. Ex 30· 15), and people who are physically or socially weak as opposed to those who are powerful and strong (*hāzēq* — cf. 2 Sam 3. 1).

(d) A fourth synonym *rāsh* on the other hand, which derives from the root *rush* ="to be in want, to be poor", and is found 21 times in the Hebrew Bible, mostly in Wisdom texts from Proverbs and Qoheleth, stands unambiguously for strictly economic poverty The word is the proper antonym of *'āshir* ("rich") and is frequently used in antithetical parallelism with it (2 Sam 12 1, Prov 14 20, 18 23, 22 2, 28 6)

(e) Finally, *miskēn* found only 6 times in the Hebrew Bible and that too in its latest books (Qoheleth and Sirach) is a word whose etymology is very dubious It is probably a loan word into Hebrew related possibly to the Assyrian *mushkenu* (="beggars") As used in the Old Testament however *miskēn* denotes not so much the destitution of the beggar as the indigence of a poor man who, because he does not own property, must struggle for a living by dint of hard and painful labour.

Two points emerge from this rapid survey of the Old Testament words for the poor.

1) Of the many partially overlapping synonyms which the Hebrew Bible uses to describe the poor, the word *'ānî*/*'ānāw* is certainly the most significant. Not only is it the most used of these words, it is also the richest in meaning It expresses most accurately and completely the multifaceted character of the biblical understanding of the poor Its synomyns (*'ebyôn*, *dal*, *rāsh* and *miskēn*) tend to take up one or other of these aspects: economic deprivation, social backwardness or physical inadequacy. That is why they are frequently used in conjunction with *'ānî* (cf. the *'ānî we'edyôn* [poor and needy] of Dt 24: 14;

Ps 37: 14; Ezek 16: 49; or the *'am 'ānî wedal* [a people poor and weak] of Zeph 3: 12; or the *'ānî wārāsh* [the oppressed and the destitute] of Ps 82: 3), or in parallelism with it (*'ebyôn* in Is 29: 19; Amos 8: 4; Ps 35: 10; and *dal* in Amos 2: 7; Is 10: 2; Ps 82: 3), in order to bring out one or other aspect of this multifaceted word. It is by determining the meaning given to *'ānî/'ānāw* in the Bible that we shall arrive at the proper biblical understanding of the poor.

2) The variety of the terms used to describe the poor in the Bible and the frequency of their occurrence is striking, and gives a unique flavour to the religiosity of the Bible. No other religious tradition I know of gives such importance to the poor or assigns to them so significant a role For the Bible does not (as other religious texts tend to do) merely present the poor as deserving of human concern (Ex 23· 11; Lev 19. 9-10, 25. 25-28, Dt 15· 7-11; 24 14-18) Nor does it (as do other expressions of popular wisdom) merely point to the plight of the poor as warning against wastefulness and sloth (Prov 6 6-11, 21: 17; 23 21, Sir 18 32) Such ethical and proverbial sayings are in fact marginal to the Bible's main concern, which is to reveal the theological significance of the poor, the part they have to play in saving history. Victims of human history, the poor, as the Bible defines them, are also those through whom that history is redeemed.

This specifically biblical understanding of the role of the poor can, I suggest, be spelled out in the following three propositions (1) the poor in the Bible form *a sociological group* whose identity is defined not by their religious attitude but by their social situation, (2) the poor in the Bible are *a dialectical* group whose situation is determined by antagonistic groups standing over and against them, and (3) the poor in the Bible are *a dynamic group* who are not the passive victim of history but those through whom God shapes his history. Such a description of the biblical poor obviously invites comparison with the Marxists working class — also a sociological group which is both the victim of history and its maker. We shall, then, after we have examined each of these three propositions given above, and tested its appropriateness as a description of the biblical understanding of the poor, proceed to ask how far this understanding is consonant with the Marxist understanding of class.

1. *The Poor in the Bible as a Sociological Group*

a *In the Old Testament*

In the Old Testament the poor (*'aniyyîm*) are primarily the sociologically poor. They are the economically destitute and the socially

outcast, typified by the characteristic biblical figures of exploited powerlessness: the widow, the orphan, and the refugee (Ex 22: 21f; Dt 10: 18; Ps 68: 5; 146: 9; Jer 7: 6; 22: 3; Zech 7: 10; Mal 3: 5). If the *'ānī* in the Bible has at times the religious connotation of one who puts his trust in God alone, this is a secondary and derived meaning, built upon the primary sociological meaning of the word. It is the sociologically poor who learn from their powerlessness to place their whole trust in God. The poor in spirit are thus also the materially poor. Sociologically deprivation of some sort is thus the basic feature of the biblical poor

Concretely, the poor would comprise the following more or less well defined groups:[10]

(a) The poor of the Old Testament would include impoverished and indebted small peasants who live in grave economic distress, without being wholly destitute or marginalized They still own some property (Prov 13 23) and so are both liable to taxation (Ex 30 15, Lev 14 21), and vulnerable to economic exploitation (Amos 5 11; Is 3 14, Prov 22 22) And they still enjoy tribal or citizen's rights so that they can claim — but are frequently denied —"justice at the gate" (Ex 23 6-8, Amos 5: 12, Is 10 2; 11. 4, Jer 5: 28, Prov 29 7)

(b) The poor in the Old Testament would include too the rural and the urban destitute — unemployed landless labourers, bonded labour (enslaved because of their inability to pay their debts), a city proletariat of unemployed artisan and beggars — all those who possess nothing and eke out a precarious existence through begging, or through the relief provided by a socially conscious community These are the "poor" (*'anāwîm*) envisaged in the social legislation of Israel's great codes which prohibit the exhaustive harvesting of fields or vineyards so as to allow the poor to gather up the gleanings (Lev 19 9f, Dt 24 19-22), or the charging of interest on loans (Ex 22 25, Lev 25 36-38, Dt 23 19f), or the ruthless exaction of pledges (Ex 22: 26f, Dt 24. 10-13, Ezech 18: 12), and which prescribe radical measures of social relief through institutions like the "year of rest" (Ex 23 10f, Lev 25. 1-7, Dt 15 1-18) or the "jubilee year" (Lev 25 8-17) Such too are the "poor and the needy" commended to our concern in prophetic oracles and wisdom sayings which warn us against exploiting or oppressing them (Amos 2 6, 8 6, Is 3 14, Ezek 22: 29, Zech 7. 10, Prov 22 22); or which urge us to look after their need (Is 58 6-9, Ezek 16: 49)

10 SCHWANTES (see n 9 above) 81-83, 200-202, 261-62.

(c) To a lesser extent the poor in the Old Testament are those afflicted or oppressed in any way and not just the economically needy. The poor can thus be identified with exiled Israel as a whole, so that *'anāwîm* becomes synonymous with *'ammî* ("my people") as in Is 41: 17-20; 49: 13; 51: 21f; 54: 11-14; Ps 72: 2); or with a specially oppressed group within it the *'anwe 'ammî* ("the poor of my people") of Ex 22: 25; Is 10: 2; Ps 72. 4.

(d) To an even smaller extent, in a limited number of texts mainly from post-exilic times, the "poor" in the Old Testament can mean the spiritually poor, the "poor of Yahweh", who place their trust in God alone (Is 66 2, Zeph 3· 12) This is specially true of some exilic and post-exilic psalms, in which the original sociological meaning of *'anāwîm* has been so overlaid by the spiritual, that it is often impossible now to distinguish between the two (Ps 22 24; 34 6, 86 1; 140: 12-13).

b. *In the New Testament*

This wide spectrum use of the word for "poor" in the Old Testament, where *'ānî*, *'ebyôn*, *dal*, *rāsh* and *miskēn* can stand for the materially needy, the socially oppressed or the spiritually lowly, is not taken up in the New Testament, which understands the poor in a more restricted and literal way The standard, indeed almost the exclusive designation for the poor in the New Testament is *ptōchos* from the roots *ptōssō* = 'to crouch or to cringe". The Greek word thus describes a person who is destitute, that is, one who lacks the necessities of life, and must eke out his existence by begging The word *ptōchos* is thus a much stronger term than its three equivalents which occur just once each in the New Testament For both *penēs* (2 Cor 9 9) and the related *penichros* (Lk 21· 2) describe an indigent rather than a destitute person, one who lacks property and so must work painfully for his living; while *endeēs* (Acts 4 34) from the root *endeō* - "to be in want of something", stand simply for someone in need These etymological differences however do not affect the usage of these words, which are in fact used synomously in the New Testament.

The use of *ptōchos* in the New Testament is significant:

(a) Thrice the word is used for the spiritually poor, but with its spiritual sense clearly indicated by a qualifying expression (as in the "poor in spirit" of Matthew 5: 3), a governing word (as in the "beggarly elemental spirits" [*ptōcha stoicheia*] of Gal 4 9), or by the context (as in Rev 3· 17 where "poor" stands for the spiritual emptiness of the Laodicean church, which is what the text is talking about).

(b) Of the remaining 25 occurrences of the word (parallel occurrences in Synoptic passages counting as one), fully 22 indicate merely the economically distressed or the destitute (Mk 12: 42ff; Lk 16: 20.22; Jas 2: 2-6) who are to be the recipients of almsgiving and aid (Mk 10: 21, Lk 14: 5; Lk 14 13.21; 19: 8, Jn 13: 29; Rom 15: 26; 2 Cor 6: 10; Gal 2: 10) This is true also of the three synomyns for *ptōchos* that we find in the New Testament — of the *penēs* of 2 Cor 9. 9 (in a quotation from Ps 112 which refers to the poor Christian of Jerusalem, for whom Paul is collecting money), of the *penichros* of Lk 21 2 (which describes the widow of the widow's mite), and of the *endeēs* of Acts 4: 34 (the needy, who are singularly absent in the first Christian community of Jerusalem)

(c) In only three New Testament texts (Mt 11 5 = Lk 7 22, Lk 4. 18 and Lk 6. 20) is the meaning of *ptōchos* in dispute. These are texts in which Jesus announces "the privilege of the poor". The "poor" have the "good news" preached to them (Mt 11 5, Lk 4 18), for the Kingdom of God is theirs (Lk 6 20) How then are we to understand these *ptōchoi*, the privileged beneficiaries of Jesus's preaching, to whom, the Kingdom of God is exclusively promised ?[11] Are they the spiritually poor whose religious attitude of openness and trust disposes them to receive God's love ? Or are they the sociologically poor whose situation of social deprivation invites God's saving action on their behalf ?

Western exegesis as part of the immense ideological production of an affluent and intensely acquisitive society, built on principles diametrically opposed to those of Jesus, has tended to the first option, and has tried systematically to spiritualize the gospel understanding of the poor In his monumental three-volume study on the Beatitudes, Jacques Dupont gives quotations from four different authors which illustrated this strikingly One is from a Roman Catholic Old Testament exegete, Albert Gelin, another from T W Manson an Anglican specialist in the New, a third from a conservative Lutheran theologian, Leonhardt Goppelt, and the fourth from the radical Protestant scholar, Rudolf Bultmann.[12] All four are reluctant to identify the poor of the beatitude to whom Jesus announces the good news of the Kingdom as a social class Rather, the poor, the hungry, and the weeping of the first three Lucan beatitudes (Lk 6 20ff)— almost certainly more original than the better known eight beatitudes of Matthew (Mt 5: 3-10), and

11 Joachim JEREMIAS, *New Testament Theology, Vol I*, London, SCM, 1971, 116

12 DUPONT (see n 9 above) II, 13-15

a good approximation of what Jesus actually said[13] — are blessed (they believe) not because of their social situation but because of their religious attitude. They are "poor" not because they are in need, but because they have made themselves humbly dependent on God; they hunger not for bread but for salvation; they weep not on account of the deprivations and indignities they suffer but because they long for the Kingdom.

This tendency to spiritualize the poor of the beatitudes which cuts across all denominational differences and brings together exegetes who would otherwise agree on scarcely anything else, is a good indication of the extent to which exegetical trends are in fact determined by the spirit of the times. It may be a pointer too to the hermeneutical significance of class we have spoken of above. But in its spiritualized understanding of the poor in the gospel it is unacceptable, and is being increasingly rejected by exegetes today. Because of its growing sensitivity to social issues in a world that has been rudely awakened to social awareness (largely, I believe, because of the resounding prophetic protest of Karl Marx), Western exegesis, to its credit, has begun to rediscover the sociological content of the gospel understanding of the poor, and so to recover the specific challenge of biblical religiosity, its strongly social thrust. There may indeed still be scholars who would like to understand the poor of the New Testament, specially those to whom Jesus promises the Kingdom, as the spiritually poor But there is a growing consensus today that in the New Testament, even more than in the Old, the word "poor" is a sociological category even in the three good-news-to-the-poor texts mentioned above.

For the context of these texts, and the way in which they have been formulated, makes it clear that here too *ptôchos* has been given a sociological and not a religious meaning — but a sociological meaning that is wider than the one it has elsewhere in the New Testament, where to be poor means merely to be in economic need. The *ptôchoi* to whom Jesus announces the good news of the Kingdom are a larger group. They include not only the destitute (a fast growing population in the Palestine of Jesus' time, where heavy civil and religious taxation led to large scale rural indebtedness, the selling off of small landholdings, and the creation of a vast rural and urban proletariat, subsisting precariously on daily wage labour, begging, or banditry),[14] but also the illiterate,

13. *Ibid*, I, 205-98.

14. On the economic situation of Palestine at the time of Jesus, cf Frederick C Grant, *The Economic Background of the Gospels*, London, Oxford Univ. Press, 1926; Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem at the Times of Jesus*, London, SCM, 1969; S Safrai M. Stern, *The Jewish People in the First Century*, *Vols I-II*, Philadelphia, Fortress, 1974-76 For an analysis of the social situation cf Francois Houtart, "Palestine in Jesus' Time" *Social Scientist* 42 (1976) 14-23

the socially outcast, the physically handicapped, and the mentally ill (in gospel language: the "poor", the "little ones", the "tax collectors and sinners", the "sick" and the "possessed") who form so large a part of the crowds that continually swarm about Jesus in the early days of his Galilean ministry (Mk 1 33 45; 5. 24; 6: 34; 8: 1-2). All these are the "poor" because all are seen as victims of an oppression—whether human (as with the destitute and the outcast) or demonic (as with the crippled, the sick and the possessed)— which reduces them to a condition of diminished capacity or worth It is this diminution (whether social, physical or economic), this being 'bent' (*'ānāh*), this state of oppression, which is the specific feature defining the gospel (indeed the biblical) poor.

c. *Conclusion*

All through the Bible, then, the poor are a sociological rather than a religious group Their identity is defined not by any spiritual attitude of openness or dependence on God, but simply by their sociological situation of powerlessness and need This need is not necessarily economic need For biblical poverty is a sociological category that is wider than the merely economic. Economic deprivation is of course a capital feature of the biblical understanding of the poor, since any category other than the destitute who are included in the great mass of the biblical poor (the exploited, the oppressed, the outcast, the crippled, the sick) will also, normally, be in great economic need. But such economic need does not enter into the definition, as it were, of the biblical poor The poor of the Bible are all those who are in any way, and not just economically, deprived of the means or the dignity they need to lead a fully human existence, or who are in a situation of powerlessness which exposes them to such deprivation The poor of the Bible are thus the "wretched of the earth", the marginalized, the exploited, all those who are actually or potentially oppressed. In his brief but lucid survey of the vocubulary of poverty in the Old Testament, Augustine George has expressed this well

> This vocabulary expresses an understanding of poverty quite different from our own For our modern language, as already in Greek and Latin, poverty is the lack of goods, it is an economic idea While Hebrew sometimes considers poverty a lack (*rāsh*) or a situation of begging (*'ebyôn*), it views it primarily as a situation of dependence (*'ānî*, *'ānāw*, *miskēn*) or weakness (*dal*) In the biblical mind, the poor person is less one who is indigent and more one who is oppressed, an inferior or a lesser one It is a social idea This is why later, when the poor begin to spiritualize their condition, their ideal will not become detachment from the goods of this world but rather a voluntary and loving submission to the will of God [15]

15 GEORGE (see n 9 above) 6

2. The Poor in the Bible as a Dialectical Group

Poverty in the Bible is sometimes attributed to internal factors, that is, to the behaviour or attitude of the poor themselves. Laziness is identified as the cause of poverty in Prov 6: 6-11 and 10: 4; luxurious living in Prov 21: 17 and Sir 18. 32; gluttony and drunkenness in Prov 23. 21. But this way of thinking is found only in a few Wisdom texts which retail the popular wisdom of the Hellenistic world in the form of proverbial sayings. It is quite atypical of the Bible, which elsewhere consistently locates the basic cause of poverty in external factors: the exploitation of the poor by elite groups that dominate and oppress them.[16] The poor in the Bible are thus a dialectical group, in the sense that it is a group whose situation is determined by and depends dialectically (through mutual causation) upon that of other groups which stand in opposition of it.

a. *In the Old Testament*

In the Old Testament, the poor (*'ānî*) are opposed not so much to the "rich" (*'āshîr*) as to the wicked (*rāshā'*— cf Ps 10: 2, 37· 14, 82 3f; 147 6; Job 36 6, Is 11 4ff), to the "haughty" (*rām* — cf. 2 Sam 22 28, Ps 18 28, Is 26 5f), to the "powerful" (*hazēq* — cf Ps 35· 10). These exploit the poor and the needy (Amos 8 4-6; Is 3· 14ff; Ezek 22 29, Ps 12 5; 35. 10), deceive them with lying words (Is 32 7), pervert justice to deprive them of their rights (Is 10 2); "devour" them (Prov 30 14, Hab 3 14), swallow up their fields (Is 5. 8-10, Prov 13 23); oppress and crush them (Amos 4. 1), sell them into slavery (Amos 8: 4-6); "pursue" them (Ps 10. 2, 109. 16), and even slay them (Ps 37 14). The overall picture, found with nuances throughout the Old Testament, is that of a powerless and harrassed group, reduced to a state of indigence by the unjust and violent exploitation of the strong.

The number of the poor, their situation of destitution, the extent of the exploitation that they suffer, doubtless varied considerably in the course of Israel's history, becoming progressively worse as we pass from the relatively egalitarian tribal society of the pre-monarchical period, to the monarchy when the exploitation of the people by a nobility owning the land and controlling the apparatus of justice was greatly intensified, provoking a sharp reaction from the pre-exilic prophets.

16. Cf Ian RATHBONE, "Oppression and Hope: A Biblical Perspective", in *Christian Worker*, Colombo, 1985/1, 37-43. "there are one hundred and twenty-two specific texts where oppression is indicated as the cause of poverty Causes of poverty such as laziness are mentioned only rarely Significantly, however, these are the references we hear about most from many both in the churches and elsewhere" (p 37).

New levels of exploitation were reached in the exilic and post-exilic periods when poverty in Israel becomes so widespread that the whole people can be called Yahweh's poor (Is 49: 13; 51: 21ff).[17] But whatever its form, poverty in the Bible is experienced not as a natural phenomenon, the inevitable outcome of one's *karma*, or the acceptable result of the free play of market forces It is always identified as the avoidable and undesirable consequences of injustice and exploitation. Its existence in Israel is sensed as an intolerable scandal, for God had given his people a "good land" (Dt 1 25.35; 3 25, 6 18..), richly endowed with material wealth (Dt 8 · 7-10), in order that there might be no poor (*'ebyôn*) among them (Dt 15· 4) That the poor continue to exist becomes a scandal to the conscience of Israel and a warning that it has failed to live up to its calling.

This warning is reinforced by Yahweh's attitude to the poor, in which we can distinguish several stages of commitment

(a) Yahweh is concerned about the poor He is their refuge and protector (Is 3 13-15, 24. 4ff, Zeph 3 12; Ps 14 6); he responds to their needs (Is 41 17-20), he consoles and comforts them (Is 49 13)

(b) Yahweh vindicates his poor He pleads their cause (Is 51 22), he defends the "widow, the orphan, and the refugee" (Ex 22: 21-24, Dt 10 17-19, Ps 69 5), and saves "the oppressed of all the earth" (Ps 76. 9, 146 7-9), he despoils those who despoil the poor (Prov 22 23).

(c) Yahweh demands a like concern from his people (Ex 22 21-24, Lev 19 10, Dt 15 1-11, 24 14f 17f, Is 58 1-12, Jer 7 5-7, Ezek 16 49, Zech 7 10), and from their king (Is 11 4, Jer 22 16, Ps 22 1-4), and, through a long succession of prophets, he denounces every form of oppression with unparalleled vigour (Amos 2 6-8, 4 1-3; 6. 4-8 Mic 2 1-3 Is 3 13-15, 10 1-4, Jer 22 13f, Ezek 34 1-24).

(d) Indeed so radical is Yahweh's concern for the poor, "his people" (Is 3 15) that not only does he plead their cause but as it were identifies himself with them "He who oppresses the poor," Proverbs tells us, "insults his maker" (Prov 14· 31), while to be "kind to the poor" is to "lend to the lord" (Prov 19 17).

(e) This close identification of Yahweh with the poor leads to a *lex talionis* whereby those who oppress the poor are ultimately impoverished (Prov 22 16); those who are deaf to the cries of the poor find their own

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17 Cf Michael KARIMATTAM, "The Ideal Hebrew Society in the Vision of the Exilic and the Post Exilic Prophets", in D S AMALORPAVADASS, *The Indian Church in the Struggle for a New Society*, Bangalore, NBCLC, 1981, 551-66, sp 558-63.

cries unheeded (Prov 21; 13); and those who are kind to the poor prosper and are happy (Prov 14: 21; 28: 8,27).

Such a *karmic* law is obviously only a parenetic formulation of Yahweh's concern for the poor, urging us to a similar concern. And Yahweh's concern is ultimately grounded in the biblical understanding of the poor as the victim of injustice and oppression. It is because the poor are a dialectical group whose situation is not of their own making, nor the result of chance or natural causes, but the avoidable effect of unjust oppression, that they have a claim on Yahweh's concern.

b *In the New Testament*

In the New Testament this dialectical character of the poor is less evident. The poor (*ptōchos*) are here opposed not to the "wicked", but, more naturally, to the "rich" (*plousios*)— cf Mk 12· 41f, Lk 6: 20-26, 14 12-14, 16 19-31, Jas 2· 1-6, 2 Cor 6 10, 8· 9, Rev 13: 16). Rich and poor do not confront each other as conflicting groups in a dialectical relationship of mutual dependence, with the rich creating as it were the poor through their exploitation and oppression. Indeed except in Jas 2· 5f and 5: 1-6 and in occasional sayings of Jesus like the one reported in Mk 12 44, the New Testament does not speak of oppression and exploitation by the rich It speaks rather of their excessive preoccupation with material wealth which leaves them indifferent to God (Lk 12 13-21) and to neighbour (Lk 16 19-31). Greed rather than exploitation is the sin of the rich in the New Testament. The opposition of rich and poor in the New Testament thus appears to be not so much the opposition of conflicting classes as the opposition of constrasting situations. The poor are (1) in a situation of need and so commended to our care more than the rich who enjoy a surfeit of goods (Lk 14 12-14); and the poor (2) who are in a situation of salvation because they rather than the rich are to be the beneficiaries of God's saving action (the Kingdom of God), in the eschatological reversal which is imminent (Lk 6· 20-26; 16· 19-31)

Yet behind this understanding of rich/poor the Old Testament dialectic of conflicting classes is implicit The eschatological reversal announced in the New Testament, when the hungry will be filled (by God) with good things, and the rich sent away empty (Lk 1. 52f; 6: 20-26) makes no sense unless the Old Testament understanding of poverty as a state of unjust oppression continues into the New. In the New Testament too, as in the Old, the rich/wicked are seen as the exploiters of the poor, who are the exploited and the oppressed. Only then can we understand how God takes side with the poor ("blessed are you

poor") and against the rich ("Woe to you rich"). For God must redress injustice and he can only do this by bringing down the oppressor (the rich) and lifting up the oppressed (the poor). It is clear too why the New Testament proclamation of the Kingdom (God's definitive saving intervention in history) must always be "good news" to the poor, and bad news to the rich.

c. *Conclusion*

In spite of differences in emphasis then, the biblical understanding of the poor as a sociological and a dialectical group is basically the same throughout the Bible. If the sociological character of the poor is more evident in the New Testament than it is in the Old, their dialectical character is less evident. Rarely in the New Testament (Jas 5. 1-6; Mk 12 44) do we find anything like the powerful prophetic denunciation of the exploitation of the poor by the wicked, that is so significant a part of the Old For where the "wicked" of the Old Testament are defined in terms of their exploitation of the poor, the "rich" of the New Testament are recognised primarily by their greed, their single-minded devotion to mammon (Mt 6 24, Lk 16 10-14) which leaves them impervious to love for God or concern for their neighbour So too when the Old Testament sees the spiritual dimension of poverty as an undivided trust in God (poor in spirit), the New Testament sees it primarily in detachment (spiritual poverty), that is, in freedom from the tyranny of material things (Lk 12 15)

Such a sociological and a dialectical understanding of the poor in the Bible precludes any romanticization of poverty Real poverty, as distinct from metaphorical or "spiritual poverty", is never valued in the Bible for itself As a state of economic or social deprivation brought about by exploitation, it is an evil Biblical teaching aims not at perpetuating such poverty but at eliminating it So Yahweh promises to vindicate the poor so that they will be poor no more. And Jesus, who blesses not poverty but the poor, announces the dawning of the eschatological age which will bring all poverty to an end.

3. *The Poor in the Bible as a Dynamic Group*

The deprived and the exploited group of the poor are not depicted in the Bible as a pitiable group of unfortunates of no historical significance whatever, who merely wait passively for the deliverance promised them in the prophetic and apocalyptic texts of the Old Testament, and announced as imminent by Jesus in his proclamation of the Kingdom of God They are given a significant role in biblical history. History

is of course the key category of biblical religion. For the Bible (both in its Old and New Testaments) is not primarily a book of doctrine retailing metaphysical truths about God, humankind and the universe; nor is it a book of worship, explaining complex rituals or spelling out elaborate techniques of prayer; nor even a code setting down cultic or ethical norms Doctrinal, cultic, and legal texts do in fact abound in the Bible, but they are all integrated into the history of Israel and of Jesus. It is this history which is primary, because it is seen as the locus of God's encounter with humankind

Obviously the history that the Bible narrates is not critical history but confessional or kerygmatic history — history interpreted as an expression of an encounter with God and narrated in such a way as to bring out the contemporary significance of this encounter as tellingly as possible. Such history "is founded in the actual history", but so interpreted "that the historic and factual can no longer be detached from the spiritualising interpretation which pervades them all."[18] It is this confessional history of Israel and of Jesus that is the soul of biblical religion, and in it the poor are given a significant and dynamic role This emerges with particular clarity in the two foundational moments of this history· the Exodus event in the Old Testament, and the coming of Jesus in the New.

a *In the Old Testament*

The Exodus is obviously the central moment in the confessional history of Israel The earliest and most widely used of the confessional formulae in which Israel affirms her faith in her God, is the one in which she acknowledges Yahweh as the one "who brings Israel out of Egypt".[19] Possibly the oldest Old Testament tradition we possess, the Song of Miriam (Ex 15 20ff),[20] sings precisely of this liberation. And the most ancient of the cultic creeds of Israel (Dt 26 5-9, 6 20-23, Jos 24. 2-13), while they cover a wider range of saving history (from the Patriarchs to the settlement) also focus on the Exodus as the central saving event It would seem then that the Old Testament has grown up by the accretion of tradition round this central core. These extend the central historical core towards the past through the integration of the traditions about patriarchial and primeval history, and towards the future, through the addition of the traditions contained in the historical,

18. Gerhard von RAD, *Old Testament Theology*, *Vols I-II*, Edinburgh, Oliver & Boyd, 1962, I, 108
19. *Ibid.*, 121
20 Georg FOHRER, *Ueberlieferung und Geschichte des Exodus*, Berlin, Toepelmann, 1964, 111

prophetic, and wisdom books, which take the history of Israel from the settlement in Canaan, through the pre-monarchical and monarchical periods to its "resettlement" after the exile. This is obviously similar to the way in which the New Testament has grown up by the accumulation of traditions about Jesus round the central proclamation of his death and resurrection.

But the Exodus is not merely the historical core of the biblical narrative: it is also its theological centre. It is in the Exodus that Israel receives her specific God-experience and is given her specific self-understanding of her role as God's people. This is brought home to us in a late but significant Old Testament text, the Priestly version of the call of Moses (Ex 6. 2-7), which gives us Israel's mature reflection on the significance of her history:

> Say this to the people of Israel
>
> "I am Yahweh
> and I will free you from the burden
> of the Egyptians,
> and I will deliver you from their bondage,
> and I will redeem you with an outstretched
> arm and with great acts of judgment,
> and I will take you for my people,
> and I will be your God,
> And you shall know that
> I am Yahweh
> who has freed you from the burden
> of the Egyptians" (Ex 6 6-7)

The text speaks of the revelation of a new name for God given to Moses, a name not revealed to the Patriarchs. Since a name in the world of the Bible is never an empty label but always the disclosure of the nature or the function of a person or thing, the revelation of a new name constitutes a new self-disclosure by God. Israel is thus constituted by a new understanding of God — not of his abstract essence (such metaphysical speculations about God himself are totally foreign to the Bible where 'no one can see God and live")— but of his relation to his people. Israel, that is, has a new and specific experience of God. She experiences God as "Yahweh", that is, as the one who liberates her "from under the burden of the Egyptians." But the liberation that Yahweh brings is not just a liberation from servitude it is also a liberation for service. If Yahweh liberates Israel from bondage in Egypt, redeems and delivers her, it is in order to make her "his people".

What this means is spelled out in the covenant at Sinai (Ex 19: 1-20:21) — originally an independent tradition which the compilers

of the confessional history of Israel have added to the Exodus traditions, in order to explicate their meaning. The Sinai covenant spells out the new social order which Israel is to adopt in order to become Yahweh's people, that is, to form the free, just, non-exploitative community that will serve as a "contrast community" to the oppressive, violent and power-hungry city states among which Israel lives (Ex 19: 4-6; Dt 4: 6-8).[21] The strongly social legislation of Israel's codes (The Covenant Code of Ex 20: 22-23; 33; The Priestly Code of Lev 2-15; the Holiness Code of Lev 17-26; the Deuteronomist Code of Dt 12-26) is a witness of Israel's attempts to live up to this her vocation;[22] while the passionate denunciation of the pre-exilic prophets against the scandal of poverty and oppression in Israel (Amos 2: 6-8; 4: 1-3; 5: 7-12; 8· 4-6; Mic 2. 1-3, 3. 1-4; 6. 9-16, Is 1· 16ff; 3: 13-15; 5: 1-7; 10: 1-4) witnesses poignantly to her failure to do so. For, after an initial attempt to live as a community of free, equal peasants governed by local elected leaders ("judges"), Israel's succumbs to the temptations of a monarchy (1 Sam 8 1-22), and adopts the venal oppressive structures of her neighbours.[23]

But the dream of one day realizing this "contrast community" remains an inalienable part of Israel's hope. This hope assumes various forms in Israel's history Pre-exilic Israel hopes for the messianic kingdom, a world-wide community of justice and peace established by a descendant of David "anointed" by God for the purpose (Is 11 2-9). Post-exilic Israel, influenced by apocalyptic, looks rather for the "new heavens and the new earth," a new world order to be created by God to replace this corrupt satanic age which is doomed to destruction (Is 65 12-25). But always, Israel's remains the hope of the poor

Biblical history thus begins with the liberation of the poor. A group of utterly powerless bonded labourers rescued by Yahweh are summoned to be the nucleus of his contrast community This is the starting point of the whole confessional history of Israel ! And when the detour of God's people into errant ways that lead them to models of society imitating the oppressive systems of their powerful neighbours (the "Constantinian Era" of Israel) is brought to an end by the Exile,

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21. I owe the idea of Israel as a "contrast community" to an unpublished article of Norbert LOHFINK, *Gott auf der Seite der Armen. Biblisches zur 'optio praeferentialis pro pauperibus'* (Rome, 1984) 23-28. The idea appears also in Walter BRUEGGEMANN, *The Prophetic Imagination*, Philadelphia, Fortress, 1978, 11-27

22 RUI DE MENEZES, "Social Justice in Israel's Laws", *Biblebhasyam* 11 (1985) 10-46.

23. BRUEGGEMANN (see n 21 above) 28-43, and more elaborately in his seminal article, "Trajectories in Old Testament Literature and the Sociology of Ancient Israel", *JBL* 98 (1979) 161-85, reprinted in GOTTWALD (see n. 3 above) 307-36

it is once more a poor remnant that becomes the bearer of Israel's hope (Zeph 3: 12f).

b. *In the New Testament*

In the New Testament too it is the poor who continue to be the bearers of salvation and of hope. For just as Israel's history begins as a movement of the poor, so does the history of Jesus. Born into a poor though not destitute artisan family (Mk 6. 3), Jesus is shown "de-classing" himself, giving up the security of family and of home (Mk 3 31-35) to become an itinerant preacher with no where to lay his head (Mt 8 20) His first followers too come from the same artisan class to which he belongs, or are drawn from the social outcasts (tax-collectors and sinners) among whom he moves (Mk 2 13-17, Lk 15 1-2). Four are fishermen (Mk 1 16-20), one an "untouchable" toll collector collaborating with the hated Roman regime (Mk 2 13); a third is a zealot, a member of an outlaw group waging a guerilla war against Rome (Lk 6 15) We know nothing about the other close followers of Jesus, but none seems to have come from the upper or even the middle strata of society

Jesus has indeed some rich sympathizers but they are fewer and more marginal to his movements than is generally realized Not all the "tax collectors' who associate with him, nor the Pharisees who invite him to dine, are necessarily rich The chief customs tax collector of a district or a town (like Zaccheus in Lk 19 1) would no doubt be wealthy But Zaccheus is an exception in the gospels The tax collectors mentioned there are not such important officials, but their agents, the employees (often slaves) charged with the actual collection of tolls. These were poor, despised men, who were paid a pittance and resorted to so dishonourable a profession only because they were driven to it by desperate need [24] The Pharisees too were a group that drew its memberships mainly from the artisan and lower middle classes of Jewish society They were influential because of the piety and the integrity of their lives, not because of the wealth they possessed or the power they wielded [25] Very few truly rich people meet us in the pages of the gospel, and these are either opposed to Jesus (like the Sadducees, or the Elders), or they fit rather uneasily into his company. A rich land-owner who has much property is unable to accept Jesus' invitation to sell what he has and follow him (Mk 10 17-22), Nicodemus a member

24 JEREMIAS (see n 11 above) 110-11, Luise SCHOTTROFF & Wolfgang STEGEMANN, *Jesus von Nazareth — Hoffnung der Armen*, Stuttgart Kolhammer (Urban Taschenbuch) 1978, 16-24

25 JEREMIAS (see n 14 above) 246

of the council visits Jesus by night because he is afraid of damaging his reputation among the upper class Jews (Jn 3: 1); Joseph of Arimathea, described expressly as a "seeker" rather than a disciple of Jesus, is heard of only as one who helps out in his burial (Mk 15: 43). By and large the Jesus movement begins as a movement of the poor. And whatever be the sociological complexion of the early Church (probably more varied than was once supposed),[26] it continued to be and to think of itself as a Church of the poor (1 Cor 1: 26-28).

c *Conclusion*

All though the Bible, then, the poor are taken to be an oppressed group of the economically and the socially deprived, who because they are the victims of oppression will be the beneficiaries of salvation and will mediate this salvation to others. The salvation they mediate is a salvation which is eschatological but not other-worldly. It transcends the world but does not attempt to deny or escape from it. Biblical eschatology is the fulfilment of history but not its negation. "Here grows the body of the new humanity," Vatican II announces, "which even now is able to give a prefiguration of the new age." (*Gaudium et Spes*, n. 39) Pre-figured by the new humanity, salvation in the Bible is a communitarian, not merely an individual enterprise. Its image is the New Jerusalem, the end-time community (Rev 21 1-4), pre-figured and prepared for by the contrast communities that we keep on struggling to build in time.

The new humanity and the communities through which it takes shape grow through conflict. The conflict results from the ethical dualism of biblical thinking, whose basic opposition of good and evil, expressed in various ways (God/Satan, life/death, reward/punishment, liberation/bondage) finds a concrete sociological expression in the conflict of poor/wicked or poor/rich. The boundaries of these proposed groups are shifting. for the "poor" can stand for the poor in Israel (72 4), for Israel as poor among the nations (Is 49 13), or for the "oppressed of all the earth" (Ps 76: 9). The intensity of the polarization between them also varies, increasing as the biblical narratives

26 TIDBALL (see n 3 above) 90-103, Abraham J MALHERBE, *Social Aspects of Early Christianity*, Botan Rouge, Louisiana State Univ Press, 1977, Gerd THEISSEN, "Social Stratification in the Corinthian Community", in his *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity*, Philadelphia, Fortress, 1982, 69-120, Robert H SMITH, "Were the Early Christians Middle-Class ? A Sociological Analysis of the New Testament", in GOTTWALD (see n 3 above) 441-60. It seems to me that scholarship is shifting from a somewhat exaggerated view of the poverty of the early Christian community (DEISSMANN) to a much more exaggerated view of its affluence (MALHERBE, SMITH). The early Christians were most likely a poor lower middle class community with a sprinkling of rich patrons

proceed until it reaches its high point in the violent conflict of the apocalyptic texts, with one of which (the Revelation of John) the Bible, perhaps significantly, ends

This conflict is ultimately resolved by an act of God in favour of the poor, which brings their sufferings and struggles to fruition. But God acts with and through the poor For if the Bible is ethically dualistic it is "metaphysically" (so to speak) holistic. It avoids the sharp distinctions, so beloved of the Greeks, between soul and body, matter and spirit, word and deed, divine grace and human freedom. God's gift does not dispense from human effort The Kingdom comes indeed as a gift but it comes also as a responsibility inviting urgent and active response from those to whom it is given Salvation comes from God, but it is actualized in and through the struggles of the poor

B THE POOR A SOCIAL CLASS ?

To what extent, then, is this understanding of the poor in the Bible illuminated by the Marxist category of class ? Are the biblically poor a social class in the Marxist understanding of the term ? Is their history a history of class struggle ? The question is a delicate one, for it is always risky to transpose categories from one discipline to another, specially across two thousand years of history

Rather than to attempt to answer this question, then, (which in any case is a task for the sociologist and not the exegete), I shall merely make a few hopefully pertinent comments, which might suggest the direction such an answer could take.

Two Approaches to Class in the Bible

The question of class in the Bible can be answered at two levels At (1) the *historical level* one might ask whether the groups active in the history of Israel, as it actually took place, were really sociological classes in the Marxist sense of the word —(defined, that is, by their ownership or otherwise of the means of production), and whether the interaction between them took the form of a class struggle for the control of these news of production. At (2) a *theological level*, one might ask whether the Marxist category of class can be usefully applied to the poor as these are understood and presented to us in the biblical writings available to us today. Is the biblical understanding of the poor that we have spelt out above, illuminated by the Marxist category of class struggle and of class ?

1. The Historical Approach

An answer to the first, the historical question would require an investigation into the critical history of Israel; followed by a sociological analysis of this history, using models provided by current sociological theory. In spite of the rather meagre results that such critical historical investigation has yielded, significant attempts have been made to present a sociological account of the origins of Israel and of the early Church. Conspicuous among these are the works of Norman Gottwald and Gerd Theissen.[27]

Gottwald's monumental study on the "Tribes of Yahweh" explains the Hebrew settlement of Canaan not (a) as a "conquest", that is, as the overrunning of Canaanite civilization by fierce nomadic tribes from the desert (the traditional explanation, defended in the classical works Albright, Wright and Bright); nor (b) as the peaceful sedentarization of semi-nomads who infiltrated into the sparsely inhabited hill country of Palestine and settled down there (so Alt, Noth, and Weippert); but (c) as a revolt of the heavily exploited Canaanite peasants against their military overlords in the Canaanite city-states, sparked off by a "numerically small but ideologically powerful" band of escaped bonded labourers from Egypt, whose liberative God (Yahweh) and whose blue print for a new community (the Sinai covenant) provided the catalyst for the revolt (Mendenhall, and Gottwald).[28] Gottwald uses a Marxist framework to develop his massive explanation of Israel's origins. But this has been violently rejected by Mendenhall, the original proponent of the peasant-revolt model of Israel's origins, in a surprisingly petulant review of Gottwald's book, which accuses him of distorting facts to suit his ideological prejudice[29] But Mendenhall's own explanation of the peasant-revolt as a "cultural" rather than an economic and political occurrence suffers, as his own ill-tempered reaction to Gottwald's book so clearly shows, from its own unacknowledged ideological bias, and leaves too much unexplained to carry conviction Gottwald's "Marxist" explanation of the origins of Israel is still to be reckoned

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27 Norman GOTTWALD, *The Tribes of Yahweh A Sociology of the Religion of Liberated Israel*, 1250-1050 *B C E*, New York, Orbis, 1979, a massive, 900 page long compendium of historical, exegetical and sociological insights; and Gerd THEISSEN *The First Followers of Jesus* (American title *The Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity*), London, SCM, 1978

28. For a good description and a sound evaluation of these models in the light of archeological and historical data, cf. Marvin L. CHANEY, "Ancient Palestinian Peasant Movements and the Formation of Premonarchic Israel", in David N FREEDMAN & David F GRAF (eds.), *Palestine in Transition · The Emergence of Ancient Israel*, Sheffield, Almond Press, 1983, 39-89

29. George E MENDENHALL, "Ancient Israel's Hyphenated History", in FREEDMAN & GRAF (see n 28 above) 91-103.

with, and may indeed provide Old Testament studies with just the paradigm-shift it needs.[30]

Less impressive in scope, but probably more powerful in its impact has been Theissen's attempt to explain the Jesus Movement as a response to the social uprootedness that plagued Palestinian society of its time. Avoiding both the "evasion" of the Qumran sectarians and the "aggression" of the Zealots, Jesus and his followers founded a prophetic movement made up of itinerant preachers owning nothing and of groups of local sympathizers who supported them The movement attempted to renew Palestinian society from within, through a version of reconciliation and of love In his detailed and often quite sophisticated analysis of the origins of the Jesus movement, Theissen does not use Marxist categories at all. His sociological approach is basically functional.

Clearly then the Marxist categories of class struggle and of class are not necessary for the understanding of the origins of Israel and of the Church as narrated in the Bible They may however be useful categories as Gottwald pioneering study has shown They are certainly, I believe, legitimate categories, not to be dismissed out of hand because of their supposed ideological contamination Theories of social analysis, like all theories in the physical and the human sciences, are heuristic models which are to be evaluated operationally, in terms of their usefulness and not in terms of the truth or falsehood of their supposed presupposition The question to be asked is whether or not the model works (that is, whether or not it accounts satisfactorily for the relevant empirical data we possess), not what are the ideological pre-suppositions on which it depends. The reason for this is that a model of analysis can in fact be adapted to a wide variety of ideologies It is not necessarily tied to any one set of pre-suppositions, not even to those of the system in which it originated. One can, after all, adopt the theory of natural selection, without subscribing to Drawinism as a world view, or use the classical mechanics of Newton without accepting the determinism of the mechanistic universe that this seems to imply, or even attempt a Freudian analysis of dreams without necessarily agreeing with Freud's understanding of the human person.

The question needs to be studied further, but I would suggest that the link between models of analysis operating at the empirical level and the ideologies which provide philosophical interpretations for these models is not univocal The same model can be interpreted in different ways, theistically or atheistically For models do not of themselves

30 Cf "Theological Issues in *The Tribes of Yahweh* by N K Gottwald: Four Critical Reviews", in GOTTWALD (see n 3 above) 166-89, sp 174

raise questions of ultimate meaning. When such questions arise it is because a model has already been made part of an ideology, from which it can be detached and linked to another. Scientific theories are theologically neutral. There is much truth (though not in the sense he intended it !) in Laplace's celebrated remark that "science (as science) has no need of a God-hypothesis."

To reject Marxist analysis on theological grounds implies, it seems to me, a confusion of two different language games. I suspect, too, that any such rejection would re-enact in sociology what once happened in physics (with Galileo), in biology (with Darwin) or in psychology (with Freud). In each case a scientific model was rejected because of its supposed theological implications, with disastrous results.

2. *The Theological Approach*

Our concern in this paper, however, has been not the critical history of Israel but its confessional history — the history of Israel as this has been interpreted and proclaimed by the Bible. The relevant question for us, then, is not so much the historical as the theological one. How far do the Marxist ideas of class struggle and class throw light on the biblical understanding of the poor ?

There is no doubt that there are analogies between the Marxist proletariat and the sociologically deprived, oppressed and the dynamic groups of the biblical poor. But these analogies are distant and tend to become even more remote as we move from the Old Testament to the New, which understands the poor in a less dialectical and dynamic way than does the Old. The poor in the New Testament are less oppressed and a good deal more passive in the face of their oppression (Jas 5: 7) than the poor of the Old. Poverty in the Bible is indeed primarily a sociological category but it is not to be defined in purely economic, much less in Marxist terms (non-ownership of the means of production). Biblical poverty has a broader sociological and even a religious meaning. The poor in the Bible are an oppressed group in conflict, but it is doubtful whether their conflict can be usefully described as a class struggle. Factors other than the need to control the means of production or to secure economic betterment enter into it, and give it a different colour. The poor in the Bible also aspire after a free, fraternal and non-exploitative community which does indeed call to mind the classless society of Karl Marx. But the Bible goes beyond Marx's classless society in its affirmation of a religious basis for social justice. The "new heavens and the new earth" will be "full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Is 11: 9; 65: 25);

and in the New Jerusalem God himself will dwell with humankind, and they will be his people and he will be with them:

> Behold the dwelling of God is with humankind.
> He will dwell with them and they will be his people,
> and God himself will be with them;
> He will wipe away every tear from their eyes,
> and death shall be no more,
> neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more,
> for the former things have passed away (Rev 21. 3-4)

C. Conclusion

While the usefulness of Marxist analysis as a method for investigating the social history of Israel and of the early Church (the historical problem) remains an open question, there is no doubt that the configuration of the poor as understood in the Bible does not coincide with that of a Marxist class. But neither is it altogether different from it. The relation between them, it seems to me, can best be described as one of inclusion and transcendence. Just as evangelization includes and transcends "liberation" (*Evangelii nuntiandi*, nn 30-39), or as the New Jerusalem includes and transcends the classless society of Marx, so too the biblical poor include and transcend Marx's proletariat, and the conflicts of biblical history include and transcend the class struggle of Marxism — taken in a corrected form and purged from elements that are not compatible with Jesus' command to universal and non-exclusive love Indeed it is just such love that requires of us that we do not simply reject adverse positions out of hand, but attempt to understand and interpret them !

"The truth", Oscar Wilde has observed, "is rarely pure and never simple." Rather than insisting on simplistic blanket oppositions between Chuch and World, Christianity and non-Christian religions, Gospel and Marxism, it would be more Christian (and certainly more Indian) to avoid accentuating differences by the much used technique of demonizing the opponent (whether it be Hinduism or Islam, targets of the aggressive missionaries of the past, or Marxism, the target of crusading conservative Christians today), and to look rather for positive elements in the opponent's positions that can be taken up, discussed, corrected and "fulfilled" This might seem too obvious to need mention But in the increasingly polemic atmosphere engendered by the irruption of religious revivalism everywhere, it may be useful to remind ourselves of a saying of Jesus whose import reaches well beyond the context in which it is reported "Do not think that I have come to destroy the law and the prophets," says Jesus, "I have come not to destroy, but to fulfil them" (Mt 5 17).

Liberation Theology and Marxism[1]

J. Kottukapally, S.J.*

Liberation Theology is not "Liberation Theology"

THE discussions and controversies around the Vatican Congregation's "*Instruction on Certain Aspects of the "Theology of Liberation*", seemingly labour under the simple but consequential misunderstanding that the Instruction is a critique, indeed, a repudiation, of liberation theology, as such, or what might be called the main current of Latin American liberation theology, represented by Gustavo Gutiérrez, Leonardo Boff and their peers.[2] The truly amazing thing about this misunderstanding is that a careful reading of the mere title of the Instruction would have cautioned one against identifying liberation theology with "liberation theology" If the Instruction criticises in the strongest terms and implicitly repudiates what it has identified (always within quotation marks) as "theology of liberation" (indifferently in the singular or in the plural), it unambiguously owns up and authenticates liberation theology as such According to the Instruction, "a theology of liberation correctly understood constitutes an invitation to theologians to deepen certain essential biblical themes with a concern for the grave and urgent questions which the contemporary yearning for liberation, and those movements which more or less faithfully echo it, pose for the Church" (IV·1)[3] That such an authentic theology of liberation is not merely a desirable possibility but an actuality, however mixed up with what is inauthentic and undesirable, is clearly affirmed when the Instruction recognises that "the theological and pastoral movement known as 'Liberation Theology' was born first in the countries of Latin America which are marked by the religious and cultural heritage of Christianity, and then in other countries of the third world, as well as in certain circles in the industrialised countries" (III:2) and that

*Fr Joseph Kottukapally, a social scientist, works at the Jyothis Centre for Religion and Culture, Cochin 682 017. His last contribution to Vidyajyoti were two articles on the nuclear threat (August and November 1984).

1. S. Kappen's article, "Church, Liberation Theology and Marxism," in *Vaidika Mitram*, April 1985, could be usefully read in conjunction with this one.

2. See my article, "The Instruction on Certain Aspects of 'Liberation Theology'," in *Word and Worship*, June 1985 It must be kept in mind that liberation theology is a *movement*, not a system or, even, a school.

3. Roman and Arabic numbers refer, respectively, to sections and subsections.

"we can distinguish" several, sometimes mutually incompatible currents in this movement (III.3; VI:8). And so, "In itself, the expression 'theology of liberation' is a thoroughly valid term: it designates a theological reflection centred on the biblical theme of liberation and freedom and on the urgency of its practical realisation" (III:4).

The Instruction's critique and warning are directed only against "that current of thought which, under the name 'theology of liberation,' proposes a novel interpretation of both the content of faith and of Christian existence which seriously departs from the faith of the Church and, in fact, actually constitutes a practical negation" (VI·9). This deviation is "brought about by the insufficiently critical use of concepts borrowed from various currents of Marxist thought" (Introduction)[4]

As I have shown elsewhere,[5] the main current of liberation theology can by no means be identified with the "liberation theology" as described by the Instruction But, neither (obviously !) can it be considered as the approved and authenticated form. It should, rather, be considered, in terms of the Instruction, as "ambiguous" and exposed to the "deviations and risks of deviation" feared by the Instruction. In any case, this article is concerned only with the theology of liberation identifiable in the works of the theologians mentioned above, none of whom can, with any sense of fairness, be said to be sold on Marxism in any form

"Karl Marx neither the Father nor the God-Father"

The relationship between liberation theology and Marxism is generally described in terms of the dependence of the former on the latter for its socio-political analysis "Impatience and a desire for results have led certain Christians, despairing of every other method, to turn to what they call Marxist analysis," says the Instruction (VII:1). The truth of the matter is, however, far more complex than can be circumscribed in such neat formulations And that is what provoked Leonardo Boff to declare in his response to Cardinal Ratzinger's earlier critique of liberation theology, made in March 1984 "Karl Marx is neither the father nor the God-father of liberation theology."[6]

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4 *Cf*, also, VI·10, VII 4, 6, 10, 13 Note that the Instruction does not rule out a sufficiently critical use of Marxist concepts At the press conference, at which he introduced the Instruction to the international press, Cardinal Ratzinger grudgingly conceded that "there are some valid and useful elements" in Marxism (*L'Osservatore Romano*, Weekly Edition, English, 10 September 1984, p 5)— not an earth-shaking revelation, but interesting in the context

5 In the article cited under n 2

6 See *Vaidika Mitram*, March 1985, for an English translation of BOFF's "Five Basic Observations to Cardinal Ratzinger's Exposition".

True, Boff, presently the star spokesman for liberation theology, himself confesses: "Here we have to be plain: it has always been the concern of liberation theology to make use of Marxism as a *medium*, as intellectual tool, as instrument for the analysis of society. That is the epistemological function of Marxism within the theology of liberation. In this manner, some categories of Marxism have — to the extent possible — gone into the discourse of faith; not the other way round. Thus, theology, not Marxism, is the object of theory... Certainly, Marxism is dangerous, but obviously, also useful; above all, in regard to the understanding of societal reality, in particular in regard to poverty and its overcoming. Only because a tool is dangerous, one need not put it away, especially considering that it is a tool, and we know none other better "[7]

This is plain enough speech. However, we need not exclude the possibility that this confession perhaps concedes too much to the critic in his superior position. At least, if one is to go by the literary works of the most well-known liberation theologians, including Gutiérrez and Boff himself, one cannot escape the impression that neither Marxism nor Marxist analysis is a major concern for them.

It should be useful to briefly recall political developments in Latin America during the last quarter century to gain perspective on liberation theology's relationship to Marxism.[8]

The 1959 Cuban revolution, which was, even when victorious in overthrowing the Battista dictatorship (sponsored by the US) only a nationalist revolution, in a short while was turned into being the first communist revolution of Latin America by the inexorable hostility of the US government.[9] Castro's friend and lieutenant, Che Guevara (an Argentinian by nationality, a medical doctor by training, a romantic revolutionary by nature, a Marxist by conviction and, above all, a great humanist, who placed love at the centre of his Marxism) left Cuba soon

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7 *Ibid*, pp 84f

8 For detailed expositions, see Enrique DUSSEL, *A History of the Church in Latin America — Colonialism to Liberation* (ET· Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1981), esp pp 127ff, *id*, *History and the Theology of Liberation — A Latin American Perspective*, Maryknoll, NY, Orbis Books, 1976, José COMBLIN, *The Church and the National Security State*, Orbis Books, 1979

9. The Manifesto of Castro's "26 July Movement" read "The 26 July Movement can be defined as guided by the thinking that is democratic, nationalist and dedicated to social justice. By democracy, the 26 July Movement considers the Jeffersonian philosophy valid and fully subscribes to the formula of Lincoln of a 'government of the people, by the people, for the people' " (quoted in David MCLELLAN, in *Marxism after Marx*, London, Macmillan, 1979, p. 242). According to U.S. scholars, R. Scheer and M. Zeitlin (as quoted by MCLELLAN, *ibid*), "The fact that the Cuban revolution took a socialist turn was due more to external pressure than to its internal momentum "

after the victory of the revolution and went out to set the whole continent on revolutionary fire. Che (as he was affectionately called) turned out to be the great inspirer of Christian revolutionaries in many parts of Latin America. The Columbian priest sociologist, Camilo Torres, the most famous of these Christian revolutionaries, was an avowed non-Marxist,[10] but chose to fight the guerilla war along with Marxists, while the young Bolivian Nestor Paz, whose guerilla journal has now unveiled a glowingly mystical Christian faith, identified himself as a Christian Marxist.[11] By the end of the decade, however, the hope for the revolutionary transformation of Latin America had died. And, it may be remembered that Gutiérrez' lecture, from which grew his *opus*, *A Theology of Liberation*, was first delivered in 1968.

The early 1970s then witnessed the emergence of the movement, Christians for Socialism.[12] It was this movement which, in fact, clearly sought to separate Marxist "analysis" from the "ideology" and to use it for a Christian political praxis The election of the Marxist Salvador Allende as President of Chile in 1971 was at once a victory for the new movement and the kindling of new hope for the continent about the possibility of bringing about radical social changes through parliamentary means [13] This hope was dashed when Allende was murdered during a CIA engineered coup in 1973. This is how José Comblin, himself a front-line liberation theologian and for many years close collaborator with Archbishop Helder Camara, tells this story

> In 1971, a movement was born in Chile which is sometimes grouped with the theology of liberation but is actually completely independent of it Known as Christians for Socialism, it is now found throughout the world (except in the Chile of today, of course) . Whether the Christians for Socialism movement is wise or well based in Christian thinking is not properly a subject for the theology of liberation, since the problem of the connections between Christianity and Marxism is formally an independent one Some theologians of liberation believe that connections can be established, others, for instance, the Argentinian authors, are openly anti-Marxist."[14]

And, to quote Comblin again

> The year 1973 marked another radical change in the Latin American situation and consequently in liberation theology With President Allende's

10 "I am not nor can I ever be a Communist neither as a Columbian, as a sociologist, as a Christian, nor as a priest," declared TORRES in his "Message to the Communists" (quoted by DUSSEL, in *A History of the Church in Latin America*, p 168)

11 Cf Néstor PAZ, *My Life for My Friends — The Guerilla Journal of Néstor Paz*, Maryknoll, NY, Orbis Books, 1975

12 Cf John EAGLESON (ed), *Christians and Socialism — The Christians for Socialism Movement in Latin America*, Maryknoll, NY, Orbis Books, 1975

13 It may be recalled that the late 1960s to the early 70s was a period when Europe was all excitement, with student uprisings, Euro-Communism, and Christian-Marxist Dialogue

14. *Op cit* (n 8), p. 37

death and the military pronunciamento in Chile, on the one hand, and the self-destruction of Peronism in Argentina, on the other, the possibility of liberation and revolution disappeared for Latin America, at least for a long time.... The theology of liberation has now entered into a crisis because its subject matter has disappeared from the historical perspective, a least for the moment. This dilemma is giving birth to a new action that has not yet received a suitable name. Some authors suggest the 'theology of captivity'.[15]

Comblin is writing, it must be kept in mind, before the Central American countries, El Salvador and, especially, Nicaragua, came into focus, where the full-fledged Christian-Marxist Sandinista revolution has overthrown another US puppet dictator, Somoza, and is now resisting, however precariously, the might of the Reagan Administration, determined to destroy it by any means. What is important is that we do not take it for granted that the theology of liberation, Marxist analysis, and revolutionary praxis belong all to one piece.

Basic Affinities

We must now pay attention to certain affinities between liberation theology and Marxism, indeed, between Christianity and Marxism. These affinities are hardly ever mentioned as such, even though they are, I believe, fundamental and so must not be omitted in any discussion on the relationship between liberation theology and Marxism.[16]

Christianity and Marxism (which is universally recognised as a quasi-religious ideology) have two basic characteristics, clearly marking them off from other world religions Religions like Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam conceive of ultimate liberation as liberation *from* the body and *from* this world, Christianity, that is to say, the Christianity of the New Testament, and Marxism interpret ultimate liberation as the liberation or transformation *of* this world. Secondly, Christianity and Marxism, unlike other religions, focus on the relationship and practical commitment to the *human other*. Christianity conceives of the individual person as essentially constituted by relationships and each one's salvation or damnation as ultimately determined by what one does or refuses to do for fellow human beings. Similarly, Marxism conceives of the individual, not as some isolated monad, but as "the ensemble of social relations."[17] Marxism is "the theory which proclaims man to be the highest being for man," and hence "*the categorical imperative to overthrow all relations* in which man is a debased, enslaved, forsaken,

15. *Ibid.*, p 37f
16. Cf my book, *The Hope We Share — A New Christian Approach to Marxism*, Barrackpore, Dialogue Series, 1983, ch 3.
17 From Marx's Thesis VI on Feuerbach (K. MARX and F. ENGELS, *On Religion*, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1976, p. 64).

despicable being."[18] Which Christian can fail to recognise the best of his religion in the communist fundamental principle, *From each according to his capacity, to each according to his need* ?

One may well wonder whether such affinities or similarities should not be traced back to the historical connections between Christianity and Marxism, one may even claim that Marxism has "stolen" some of its best goods from Christianity. The only point I want to make is that such Christian goods do exist in Marxism and are in some way operative in it, however disturbing and unacceptable that might be for certain kinds of Christianity and Marxism alike. It goes without saying that liberation theology presupposes these Christian-Marxist affinities, even when it does not explicitly highlight them. Liberation theologians, like Enrique Dussel and José Miranda, also emphatically state that man's only ultimately valid approach to God, the "totally Other," is the ethical one, through the irreducible *human other*.[19]

There are two further fundamental factors which mark off Marxism and liberation theology from all traditional philosophies and theologies· the essential *integration of theory and praxis*, and the *option for the poor*

Traditionally, philosophy has been "intellectual luxury" for the upper classes, or the ideology of the *satatus quo*; or, then, the spiritual quest of the world-renouncing monks and *sannyasis*. This has been true of India, of ancient Greece and Rome, of Christendom. Marxism overturned this conception of philosophy and turned it into the instrument of change and the weapon for the proletariat in its struggle against the bourgeoisie. This was what Marx meant when he declared "Philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it,"[20] and, "Philosophy cannot be made a reality without the abolition of the proletariat, the proletariat cannot be abolished without philosophy being made a reality."[21]

Similarly, liberation theology is theology "from the stand point of the poor," it is theology, whose hermeneutical key is the *option for the poor* and political praxis to bring about radical structural changes in their favour through their own struggles. In Gutierrez' words,

> The theology of liberation offers us not so much a new theme for reflection as a *new way* to do theology. Theology as critical reflection on historical praxis is a liberating theology, a theology of the liberating transformation of the

18 Marx's "Contribution to a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law: Introduction," *ibid*, pp 38-52

19 Cf E DUSSEL, *Ethics and the Theology of Liberation*, Maryknoll, NY, Orbis Books, 1978, José MIRANDA, *Being and the Messiah — The Message of St John*, Maryknoll, NY, Orbis Books, 1977

20 MARX and ENGELS, *On Religion*, p 64.

21 *Ibid*., p. 52.

history of mankind — gathered into *ecclesia* — which openly confesses Christ. This is a theology which does not stop with reflecting on the world, but rather tries to be part of the process through which the world is transformed. It is a theology which is open — in the protest against trampled humanity, in the struggle against the plunder of the vast majority of people, in liberating love, and in the building of a new, just and fraternal society — to the gift of the Kingdom of God.[22]

Marxist Analysis in Liberation Theology

Let us first try to reach some clarity as to what the term, Marxist analysis, means. Interestingly, this term is so much bandied about by Christians now-a-days that it is hardy realised that Marxist themselves do not use it and that its meaning does not at all seem to be clear to those who use it with the greatest ease. As far as I know, it was popularised, if not coined, by Louvain's sociologist Francois Houtart, under whom quite a number of Latin Americans had their training in sociological analysis. It generally means the Marxist way of analysing the dynamics and structures of the social reality (in contradistinction to Marxist philosophy or world view) and would seem to consist, chiefly, in the insights that the existing state of poverty and misery of the vast majority corresponding to and contrasting with the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of the few is neither God-willed nor natural, but *induced*, that is to say, resulting from the exploitation of the many by the few; and that this situation ought to and can be overcome (not reversed !) by the struggle of the exploited and oppressed in solidarity, in other words, by means of the *class struggle*.

It was the French Marxist theoretician, Louis Althusser (whose influence on liberation theologians is widely acknowledged), who, contesting Roger Garaudy's[23] thesis that Marxism is fundamentally a humanism, asserted that Marxism is *science*. According to Althusser,[24] Marxism is primarily and basically science, that is to say, the *science of history*, or *historical materialism*, and only secondarily philosophy, that is to say, the materialistic interpretation of nature, or *dialectical materialism* We need not here probe into this Marxist family controversy,[25] but we must note that Althusser seems to have on his side the authority of Frederick Engels, Marx's *alter ego*.

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22. G GUTIÉRREZ, *A Theology of Liberation*, (Maryknoll, NY Orbis Books, 1973), p 15.
23. Garaudy, for long top theoretician of the French Communist Party, was, also, a champion of dialogue with Christians Expelled from the Party for his outspoken opposition to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia (1968), he is now a Muslim, or, as he claims, a "Marxist, Christian and Muslim "
24 Cf. L ALTHUSSER, *For Marx*, London, New Left, 1977.
25 However, on the question of humanism in Marxism, see *The Hope We Share*, ch. 3.

Engels wrote in his justly famous Preface to the English translation of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (jointly composed by Marx and Engels in 1847) in 1888:

> The 'Manifesto' being our joint production, I consider myself bound to state that the fundamental proposition, which forms its nucleus, belongs to Marx That proposition is: that in every historical epoch, the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange, and the social organisation necessarily following from it, form the basis upon which is built up, and from which alone can be explained, the political and intellectual history of that epoch; that the whole history of mankind (since the dissolution of primitive tribal society, holding land in common ownership) has been a history of class struggles, contests between exploiting and exploited, ruling and oppressed classes, that the history of these class struggles forms a series of evolutions in which, now-a-days, a stage has been reached when the exploited and oppressed class — the proletariat — cannot attain its emancipation from the sway of the exploiting and ruling class — the bourgeoisie — without, at the same time, and once and for all, emancipating society at large from all exploitation, oppression, class distinctions and class struggles[26]

This *is* historical materialism, or the Marxist view of history and social development, stated in authoritative summary. Engels adds "This proposition which, in my opinion, is destined to do for history what Darwin's theory has done for biology, we both of us, had been gradually approaching for some years before 1845 "[27] So, in Engels' view, Marxism is, fundamentally, the *new, evolutionary, science of history*

Thus, Marxist analysis, as used by liberation theologians, is, in Marxist language, historical materialism — but a substantially modified version of it Substantially modified, because we can identify at least three elements which are indeed substantial to the Marxist theory, but (if not explicitly, at least implicitly) rejected by liberation theology These are. 1) the "*ultimately* determining"[28] function of the economic factor in respect of all social and historical processes — so that these latter (the "super-structures," in Marxist terms) are practically interpreted as reductively or unilaterally dependent on the former ("infra-structure"):[29] 2) the quasi-messianic role Marxism assigns to the *proletariat* (the industrial working classes) as the most evolutionarily advanced and most "class conscious" of humanity, coupled with the "leading role" of the Communist Party, as the "vanguard" of the proletariat, 3) the "dictatorship of the proletariat," to be established by

26 *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1977, pp 20f

27 *Ibid*, p 21

28 This is Engels' expression in his famous letter to J Bloch (K MARX, F ENGELS, *Selected Works* Vol II, Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing Company, 1949, p 443)— Engels' stress

29 On this problem, see *The Hope We Share*, ch 8.

the overthrow of the present "bourgeois state," as the "transitional stage" before the arrival of the classless and stateless society — which "cannot be induced," but will "arrive[30]."

There is another important qualification to be made. The Marxist concept of *class struggle* — which we shall presently take up —, while it has nothing to do with hatred, even class hatred, is conceived as *the* fundamental and quasi-metaphysical law of history and human evolution, *necessarily and by itself leading to the class-less society*. This faith, it goes without saying, is *not* shared by liberation theology.

Now, outraged Marxists and others might very well and very legitimately wonder, how *Marxist* this "Marxist analysis" still is. There is no point in quarrelling on the question of terms. For liberation theology it is merely a matter of truthfulness that what it calls Marxist analysis it does owe to Marxism. As for itself, as Boff insists in the passage quoted above, liberation theology is neither Marxism nor even Marxist Christianity, but, substantially and through and through, Christianity and theology — without qualification.[31]

The Class Struggle

This is, perhaps, the *punctum dolens* of the Vatican Instruction. The Instruction sees (with horror, of course) "liberation theology" making class struggle the "fundamental law" and "driving force" of history (VIII 5, IX 2, 3, 6, 7), which implies a perversely partisan interpretation of truth and the denial of the basis of ethics (VIII 4, 9) and the "systematic and deliberate recourse to build violence" (XI·7; II 3) for reversing the present state of violence by the upper classes (VIII 6), but inexorably leading either to an unending spiral of violence (XI 7) or to totalitarian regimes which radically betray the very cause of the poor (XI 10, Introductions)

It is a deeply entrenched and widely circulating conception (fully shared by the Instruction) that class struggle is motivated by the resentment, greed and jealousy of the poor, who would, by any means and with no respect to ethical principles, reverse the present order of domination and oppression, that is to say, make themselves the new dominating class and the present oppressors the oppressed.

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30 This is an important thesis of Lenin's *The State and Revolution* (V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing Company, 1947, pp. 141-225)

31. It may not be idle to observe that Marxists themselves have consistently and on principle made a distinction between ideology and the Party Programme. Party membership is granted on the basis of the Programme, which is different in the case of each Party, and contains a socio-political analysis and a programme proper The *Manifesto of the Communist Party* is the archetype Party programme.

An unprejudiced elementary acquaintance with the concept of class struggle, clearly set forth in the writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin, could easily dispel such a bizarre misunderstanding. That class struggle has nothing whatsoever to do with greed, envy and domination in reverse, but that it describes the historic mission of the proletariat for the emancipation of the entire humanity from the vicious domination of exploitative private property, involving terrible suffering and sacrifices for the proletariat themselves, is unmistakably and in the most simple language set forth in the very first joint work of Marx and Engels, *The Holy Family*, in the *Manifesto*, as well as in at least three of Lenin's most important works, *What Is to Be Done ?*, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* and *A Great Beginning*[32] I quote here only from the *Manifesto*, which is not only *the* key document of Marxism, but also the most easily available for anyone who cares to check. The *Manifesto* thus concludes the section on "Proletarians and Communists":

> If the proletariat during its contest with the bourgeoisie is compelled, by the force of circumstances, to organise itself as a class, if, by means of a revolution, it makes itself the ruling class, and, as such, sweeps away by force the old conditions of production, then it will, along with these conditions, have swept away the conditions of class antagonisms and of classes generally, and will thereby have abolished its own supremacy as a class In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all

Lenin insists on the important distinction between "trade-union consciousness," which has only the economic interests of the workers themselves in view, and "socialist consciousness," which is concerned with the welfare and emancipation of society as a whole,[33] Lenin castigates in the fiercest language the "labour aristocracy," "bribed and corrupted by the bourgeoisie," for the betrayal of their mission,[34] while he extols the generosity of the workers who, during a most trying period for themselves, after the revolution, invented the idea of "Communist Saturdays," on which they worked for the nation without pay [35]

Of course, it can, indeed, ought to be asked how much thoroughly impractical, even, dangerous, *idealism* underlies this sort of "materialist" interpretation of history, how scientific or realistic is the conferring of such a messianic and world-redemptive role to the proletariat, making them the suffering servants of mankind and at once self-redeemers and world-redeemers The point here is that the concept of class struggle,

32 All three works are contained in the *Selected Works*, cited under n. 30.
33. Cf *What Is to be Done ?* (*Sel Works*, I, pp 147-269)
34. Cf. *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (*ibid*, pp. 630-725).
35 Cf *A Great Beginning* (*Sel Works* II, pp 482-502).

in its original and genuine Marxist content, is itself something entirely noble, and intended to be ultimately unitive and transformative of all mankind. And if we Christians are shocked and scandalised by the actual course of the "proletarian" or communist history and reality, including what the Instruction calls "this shame of our time" (XI:10), we could most easily get over the shock by contemplating with a modicum of honesty our own ecclesial history as well as the actual reality in comparison with what they ought to have been or be.

It is not my contention that class struggle, thus conceived to serve a supremely noble purpose, is not, in itself, something profoundly ambivalent and problematic. There is no denying that, as practised, class struggle has resulted in the monstrosities eloquently described in the Instruction (XI 10 and 11)— though I am not about to concede that existing socialism and communism can be that easily interpreted away! It is also a fact that Marxists (except individual dissidents, invariably excommunicated by Parties as "renegades") have made of class struggle a *fetish* and shown themselves wholly incapable of seeing it as a problem — in my view, *the* problem of the Marxist ideology and of the Communist movement As a matter of historical fact, "proletarian internationalism," so fundamental to the nascent Communist movement, wrecked on this rock Here the First and Second Internationals went down into the abyss. It was owing to contradictory interpretations of class struggle that Lenin found himself ranged against practically all West European socialist movement (which too claimed Marx's patrimony), against Eduard Bernstein and Karl Kautsky (acknowledged as the greatest scholars of Marx's writings), against Rosa Luxemburg (the great revolutionary who commanded Lenin's profound respect), against George Plekhanov (Lenin's teacher). *Class struggle*, that is to say, its contradictory interpretations, split the *Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party* into the Bolsheviks (Lenin's faction) and the Mensheviks, made Stalin see in Trotsky the most dangerous personal and class enemy; made Mao break with Stalin and, later, with Krushchev, led to the split up of the CPI into its two major factions and innumerable splinter groups (engaged in a hunt for an ever elusive unity, when they are not anathematising one another). If today proletarian internationalism and unity of the world Communist movement is not even a mirage, the key to this situation must be sought, ironically, but truly and with perfect logic besides, in *class struggle*.

As for liberation theology, it by no means assigns to class struggle the central role Marxism assigns to it, but recognises it as a *fact*, to be reckoned and come to terms with, evaluating it in light of the Gospel

and its transcendent values and imperatives. Thereby, liberation theology does stress the evangelising and world-redemptive role of the poor, *the poor of Yahweh*, to whom the Good News is addressed, without being unconcerned about the theoretical ambiguities and practical dangers lurking everywhere.

Liberation theology does not at all believe that the poor, by their class struggle, can achieve redemption or bring down God's Kingdom. To quote Gutiérrez,

> We remain convinced — and the practice of the poor confirms this — that the truly fruitful and imaginative challenge lies in a 'contemplation in action,' in action that will transform history It has to do with encountering God in the poor, in solidarity with the struggle of the oppressed, in faith filled with hope and joy that is lived within a liberation process whose agent is the poor people [36]

This is Gutiérrez' judgment on reductionism:

> The various forms of reductionism ignore this dialectic, they also fail to perceive the relationship between the will to achieve social transformation and a faith that liberates the concrete life of the people Thus they mutilate a rich historical reality, misconstruing it idealistically and going against the current of a growing practice They fail to go to the root of the matter, where political and evangelical radicalism meet and reinforce each other [37]

The Problem of Violence

Thorough confusion, if not criminal sanctimoniousness and hypocrisy, characterises much of the contemporary theological discussion of the problem of violence It is sought to be made out that, whereas Christianity, at whose heart is the Gospel of mercy and love, lays down the categorical imperative of non-violence, Marxism and, corrupted by it, "liberation theology', believe in the "systematic and deliberate recourse to blind violence."

No one, of course, denies that the history of God's "chosen people", under both covenants, is steeped in violence and bloodshed, not only suffered, but also perpetrated, by the elect. The hypocrisy — which draws its life from heresy — consists in the implicit attempt to dissociate Jesus and his "God of mercy and compassion" from the "terrible" Yahweh of the Old Testament — which is nothing but a new version of the old Marcionism As for the rivers of blood Christians have shed in the name of the Gospel, that is all interpreted away

36 G GUTIÉRREZ, "The Irruption of the Poor in Latin America and the Christian Communities of the Common People," in Sergio TORRES and John EAGLESON (eds), *The Challenge of the Basic Christian Communities*, Maryknoll, NY, Orbis Books, 1981, p 115

37 *Ibid*

as "aberrations of the past." *Now, it seems,* the Church has finally discovered the true Jesus as the prophet of non-violence, and so uncompromisingly calls upon all to the practice of non-violence — except, of course, when "law and order," "national security," and such other "Christian values" are at stake.

The Marxist position on violence, as that on class struggle, is in itself sufficiently simple and clear: Violence is an ineluctable fact of history, as well as the inevitable accompaniment of the birth of any new society.[38] In itself, it is neither desirable nor good. But it has to be countenanced in the process of class struggle, both by suffering it and, where it is inevitable and its effectiveness can be counted on, by active use. What is assumed herein is that violence, though neither desirable nor good in itself, is not absolutely evil, but that it *can* be legitimately and effectively instrumental in the pursuit and achievement of justice and peace.[39]

It may be noted that this doctrine is neither so terribly new and revolutionary nor uniquely Marxist, but good old Christian ethical doctrine, which has always allowed violence in defence of life, honour and property, in just war and even for tyrannicide. But there *is* difference, too: traditional Christian doctrine allows for arms, chiefly in the hands of the strong and for the defence of the *status quo*, whereas Marxism allows it also in the hands of the weak and the poor and in order to defend the change of the *status quo*.

Liberation theology's analysis of and attitude to violence must be carefully differentiated. With Medellín, Puebla and, also, the Vatican Instruction, liberation theology focuses attention on the existing reality of violence, indeed, of *institutionalised* and repressive violence, whose agents are the rich and the mighty and, in particular, the state, representing and guarding the interests of the rich and mighty, and whose victims are the poor and others who make their option of them.

But now, already, we must note certain nuances that matter. The Latin American official documents and, still more strongly, liberation theologians, stress the fact of the situation of the bloody martyrdom of the Church of the poor with palpable concern. Gutiérrez can be considered to be speaking for all the Latin American Church when he declares with poignancy. "Many of our brothers and sisters have endured prison, torture, and death; and they still do. The price being

38 Cf *The Hope We Share*, ch 7

39 According to a famous remark of Marx (*Capital* Vol I, Moscow Progress Publishers, 1974, p 703), "violence is the midwife of every society pregnant with the new."

paid for these liberation struggles is very high. I hope we will never accept it as a matter of course, even though it is an everyday occurrence."[40]

The Vatican document, quite differently, describes the prevailing situation of violence with what might be called scientific detachment, without taking sides, or, perhaps, in fact, concerned more about the possible violence the poor and their champions might resort to, under the evil influence of Marxism and "liberation theology," than about the enormous violence being actually inflicted on the poor.

In any case, the first point to be made about liberation theology's analysis of violence is that it recognises that violence is a terrible and actual reality, overwhelming the poor who strive to liberate themselves, and that this situation makes liberation theology, above all, a theology of martyrdom.

As to the question, whether or not violence may be resorted to, the answers of liberation theologians do not seem to be in unison

One line of thinking, represented, for example, by Gutiérrez, would seem to approve of the use of "liberative" violence to oppose the repressive violence of the status quoists, as "*just violence*"[41] In this view, the guerilla revolutionaries of the 1960s should be commended and, perhaps, imitated

A somewhat different line of thinking, perhaps more truly faithful to the official stance of Medellin and Puebla, is represented, for example, by Enrique Dussel Dussel, though he does not directly criticise much less condemn, all resort to liberative or revolutionary violence, seems to have little faith in its effectiveness However, there *is* a violence which Dussel positively approves, and that is what he calls "prophetic" or "pedagogic" violence, the violence of the word, represented, according to him, by the prophets of the Old Testament, by contemporary prophets like Helder Camara and Oscar Romero, as well as by Jesus himself[42]

Here I would like to add a note of my own on Jesus' attitude to violence. Jesus, unlike, say, Mahavira, Buddha and Gandhi, was *not* a preacher of non-violence Jesus was known, not as an ascetic like John the Baptist, but as "a glutton and a drinker" (Mt 11·19)— and surely as a meat eater, too ! Among his disciples and, even, apostles, were Zealots, who, we have no reason to believe were converted to

40 *Op cit* (n 36), p 111

41 This expression occurs in a document, approvingly quoted by GUTIÉRREZ, in *A Theology of Liberation*, p 109.

42 Cf E DUSSEL, *A History of the Chnrch in Latin America*, pp 173ff.

non-violence and pacifism before or after joining Jesus' company — any more than Peter and other fishermen in the group gave up their trade as part of their conversion (cf. Jn 21:1ff). Indeed, the non-zealot Peter is reported to have used his sword in a brave attempt to defend the Master from being arrested. Why, Jesus (according to Luke, of all people) went as far as to tell the apostles on that fateful night, "whoever has no sword must sell his coat and buy one" (Lk 22:36).[43]

Jesus whipped out of his Father's house the animals being sold and bought there, and he "overturned the tables of the money changers and scattered their coins" (Jn 2:15). He drove a host of demons into a two-thousand strong herd of pigs and made them rush down into the sea and perish (Mt 8 30-32). He cursed a fig tree to withering because it failed to bear figs to satisfy his hunger, though "it was not the right time for figs" (Mk 11.12ff) His words addressed to the Pharisees and Scribes are so pungent and sharp as could have shocked any of the *ahimsāvādins* as much as they surely did the Pharisees and Scribes themselves

But then, did not Jesus tell his disciples to love their enemies, not to resist evil, and to show the other cheek when struck on one ? Did he not order Peter to put his sword back into its sheath, because "all who take the sword will die by the sword" (Mt 26·52)? Did he not allow himself to be led away to crucifiction, "like a lamb to slaughter," when he could have called upon his Father, who would provide him the protection of twelve angelic armies (Mt 26.53) ?

Indeed, going by the gospel reports, Jesus did and said, *all* that has been enumerated in the above two paragraphs — and much more. And that, precisely, is the point There is a complexity in the ensemble of Jesus' behaviour and words which is full of dialectical tension, which cannot be easily reduced to schemes to provide readily applicable rules, because each word and deed, necessarily, belongs to its own context as well as in that of the ensemble However, I feel, the following conclusions may be considered warranted.

It was furthest from Jesus' mind to bring about the rule and Kingdom of his Father by violent means; indeed, God's Kingdom God alone, not even he, the Son, can bring about and establish.[44] Jesus

43. I am not implying that Jesus means "sword" literally, or that the disciples did not get him wrong when they promptly produced two swords The point it that Jesus does (or Luke makes him) use this "misleading" expression.

44. Current theological expressions, like "establishing" and "extending" the Kingdom of God, with reference to the Church or Christians are, to say the least, quite unbiblical.

understood his mission to proclaim and witness to the present-as-coming Kingdom by deed and word. He did not want his own person to be defended with the sword, especially not when his "hour," set by the Father, had arrived. On the other hand, Jesus saw the breaking in of the Kingdom as a terribly violent event, with respect to both nature and man. He saw that he himself would have to die the most violent death and that his disciples' lot would not be better than his own (cf. Mt 10·21-25, Jn 13:16; 15:20). While carrying no weapon himself and refusing to be defended with the sword, Jesus did not condemn weapons or their use as intrinsically or absolutely evil

There is a sovereign character to Jesus' comportment and attitude in relation to the world — a character which has shocked idealistic and reasonable men all through Jesus' overwhelming concern is not to *preserve* life, as it was the concern, let us say, of the *ahimsāvādins* He came rather, to *give* life — life in all its fullness (Jn 10·10). In his view there is nothing here on earth that is absolutely good and so to be preserved in its given condition Everything will pass, will be changed and transformed Hence his sovereign freedom with regard to everything.

We may thus sum up our reflections on violence Force and violence are facts of existence (whether in nature or history), but they are not the same The use of force, even to the limit of taking life, *can* be legitimate, even, imperative, if unavoidable in order to defend life and values intimately connected with life

Violence, properly speaking, is the use of force which is not just and controlled In this sense, violence may never be willed, but it may have to be countenanced or permitted, on occasion; above all, it may have to be suffered Indeed, it will be the destined lot of the bearers and agents of the future to suffer violence Hence the rejection of the Messiah by his own, and the cross, hence the bloody martyrdom which ushered the Church into history, hence, too, the martyrdom of the poor Christians in Latin America, as elsewhere, who yearn and work for the future, the future of God's Kingdom of justice, love and peace

Jesus' disciples need not and should not take up arms to defend God or his Church, not to speak of spreading the Gospel with the help of armed might But we need not and should not refuse the poor their right to defend their life and basic rights with the help of arms, if that must be and can be done — any more, indeed, than we would think of banning all use of force as immoral violence, for example,

in the case of parents and teachers, to correct their wards, of doctors, to operate on their patients, of the police, to keep law and order, or, of the military, to defend their country.

What Jesus commands his disciples is not to ape or copy his behaviour and words, but to carry out the task he sets for each in each one's unique situation, with discernment under the guidance of his Spirit and strengthened by Him.

Conclusions

We might summarise our reflections: the main current of the Latin American liberation theology is not the "liberation theology" criticised by the Vatican Instruction. Liberation theology neither draws its inspiration from Marxism, nor is it stamped by Marxism; it is, rather, the new expression of old Christian faith in people who have encountered the poor of Yahweh and the Yahweh of the poor in a stunningly new way. Liberation theology has certain affinities or similarities with Marxism, which it has neither willed nor sought out, but belong to the very nature of liberation theology and Marxism It uses, selectively and critically, the Marxist analysis of the social reality, to the extent that this analysis helps the critical understanding of the actual state of affairs and a praxis demanded by this understanding — the transcendent demands of faith being always presupposed.

Let me leave the last word to Leonardo Boff

> All in all, we have always considered Marxism as a medium for the communication of something greater, i e, for faith and its historical imperatives It will help us grasp better and fill with richer content some of the central concepts of theology people, poverty, history, as well as praxis and politics not as though the theological content of these concepts were somehow reduced to their Marxist measurements On the contrary, the valid (that is to say, truth-corresponding) theoretical content of these concepts have been taken up within the horizon of theology Thus the *poor*, for example, gained a concrete material density, without losing anything of its theological background (the sacrament of Christ, etc). So is praxis no more merely politics and party-political commitment. All this is surely meant, but meant are, at once, also ethics, mysticism, eschatology, etc It is thus a question of 'sublation,' that is to say, critical and surpassing appropriation For the rest, faith has always so gone about with systems and ideologies, as we may well read also in the encyclical, *Redemptor Hominis*. Why then should Marxism be a "game preserve" ("chasse gardée") or "forbidden fruit"?[45]

45 *Loc cit.* (n. 6), pp 85f.

Instruction on Certain Aspects of the "Theology of Liberation": a Theological Reflection

Errol D'LIMA, S.J.*

IN a document given at Rome on August 6, 1984, the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued an Instruction on certain aspects of the "theology of liberation". The purpose of the document was

> to draw the attention of pastors, theologians, and all the faithful to the deviations, and risks of deviation, damaging to the faith and to Christian living, that are brought about by certain forms of liberation theology which use, in an insufficiently critical manner, concepts borrowed from various currents of Marxist thought [1]

The main attempt of the Instruction was to indicate how certain forms of liberation theology, while claiming to proclaim the gospel message of the Kingdom, ended up by simply identifying the message of the Kingdom with an earthly plan of action However, the Instruction cautioned against

> .. a disavowal of all those who want to respond generously and with an authentic evangelical spirit to the "preferential for the poor"[2]

This essay seeks to reflect theologically on some of the points made by the Instruction, and to indicate the wider theological issues that emerge from such a reflection

As a magisterial document, the Instruction is an indication of the Teaching Church's concern for the faithful at large, and it provides those who are committed to liberation theology an occasion to examine their process of theologizing The Instruction also seeks to confirm those who identify with the oppressed and encourages them to continue in their mission Our theological reflection on certain points found in the Instruction should enable us to identify more fully with the true mission of the Church towards the oppressed

*Fr Errol D'LIMA is Dean of the Faculty of Theology at the Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth (Pontifical Athaeneum) in Pune

1 *Instruction*, Introduction, p 4
2 *Instruction*, Introduction, p. 4.

We shall consider three areas touched by the Instruction: (a) the Marxist analysis, (b) the Magisterium, and (c) Desacralization. Fears are expressed that in each of these areas, attitudes and actions which are less than Christian may be found in the liberation theology movement.

A. The Marxist Analysis

It is the uncritical acceptance of the Marxist analysis along with its ideology which the Instruction warns against. It thus raises the issue as to whether a Marxist analysis can be divorced from the ideology that undergirds it. Paul VI in his apostolic letter *Octogesima Adveniens* (1971), voiced the same fear when he said:

> Too often Christians attracted by socialism tend to idealize it, in general and without restriction, as a perfect good, socialism then simply means a will for justice, solidarity and equality They refuse to recognize the limitations of the historical socialist movements, which remain conditioned by the ideologies from which they originated [3]

The pope then identifies Marxism as being a historical socialist movement that implies a close link between its analysis and ideology, and hence a Christian using the analysis must be careful not to accept its ideology:

> it would be illusory and dangerous to reach the point of forgetting the intimate link which radically binds them together, to accept the elements of Marxist analysis without recognizing their relationship with its ideology, and to enter into the practice of class struggle and its Marxist interpretation, while failing to take note of the kind of totalitarian and violent society to which this process leads [4]

It is a truism to state that every analysis of society includes a particular type of ideology, a specific understanding of man and society. But it is equally true to say that human reason and discernment have usually been able to distinguish between the analysis and the ideology from which it sprung History is replete with instances of such occurrences St Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274) did it when he used the analysis elaborated by Aristotle to construct his Christian vision of man Karl Rahner (1904-1984) did the same when he applied the method of transcendental analysis to Thomistic metaphysics. Edward Schillebeeckx (1914-) used the phenomenological method to invest the Christian understanding of the sacraments with an anthropological richness it did not possess. Hence, we may consider whether the time has not arrived for us to view the practice of Marxist analysis not as a dangerous temptation for Christians to embrace Marxist ideology,

3. Cf J. NEUNER- J. DUPUIS, *The Christian Faith*, 2154.
4. ND 2156

but rather as a tool to understand the present social, economic and political reality in today's world. In the past, there has been a Christian humanism, a Christian liberalism, even a Christian existentialism. Each of the parent systems lend themselves to atheistic interpretations of man, and yet when used in the light of faith, they have contributed appreciably to a better understanding of man in society. Could it not be the same with the Marxist analysis ?

It is enough to be human to understand economic oppression. But one does need a tool to express it in concrete and significant terms. To point out that there are underlying structures constantly at work in a distributive system and that these need to be changed, is not the right of the Marxist alone ! The tool of the Marxist analysis does offer a means for Christian theology to be rooted in this world, to deal with real and vexing problems that affect the lives of men and women and to sketch out a concrete vision of freedom and hope in Christ.

It is unfortunate that the Instruction has nothing positive to say about the Marxist analysis, an analysis that has stirred the world's conscience and has even given an impetus to the Church herself to formulate her social doctrine. During the nineteenth century and during a good portion of the twentieth, it was tacitly assumed that the use of the historical critical method would result in a Liberal outlook and that loss of faith would ensue. Respect for the method came only when Pius XII issued the encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu* (1943) Today, we realize that the historical Jesus thrown up by the historical critical method encourages us to identify more deeply with the Jesus who lived, suffered, died and rose The tension between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith was never meant to be fully resolved it was meant to challenge and make human endeavour fruitful. So too with the tool of the Marxist analysis it throws up a picture of reality under which men and women suffer, and it urges us to change it For the Christian, change is a constant witness to transcendence, the occasion to invest the present with the fulfilment promised by Christ

The Instruction also voices its fear that the spiritual message of the Gospel may be turned into an earthly plan of action. The danger of this happening is always present, and should not be overlooked The Gospels themselves testify to this danger when they speak about the temptations of Jesus (Mt 4.1-11; Lk 4.1-13), and it is Jesus himself at the outset of his passion, who rules out an identification of his Kingdom with the kingdom of this world (Jn 18 36-37).

The liberation theologians have also stated their opposition to a Marxist ideology, and have denied that social action, in whatever form, is the sole leverage that must be employed to correct unjust situations:

> . . .we must also remember that concrete liberation in history is not the ultimate, final stage either. We do seek the "new man" in history, but this concrete goal is not to be identified with the Kingdom of God [5]

> Not only is the growth of the Kingdom not reduced to temporal progress; because of the Word accepted in faith, we see that the fundamental obstacle to the Kingdom, which is sin, is also the root of all misery and injustice,. . . .[6]

The question of how the Church perceives the happenings in Latin America is a matter that causes us some anxiety. When the Enlightenment took place in Europe, the Church found it proper to censure Galileo; when nationalism came to maturity in the French Republic, the Church considered France as devastated by godlessness and anarchy, and when the Italian State came into being, Pius IX thought of himself as the "prisoner in the Vatican". In instance after instance, the Church failed to perceive the dynamics of human history acting as the stage for God's designs She had not perceived that God acted according to his sovereign good pleasure, even outside the confines of the hierarchically-constituted Church

However, there are instances where the Church is able to perceive the movement of history and to join hands with a government that is professedly communist In 1959, Fidel Castro's revolution had overtaken Cuba, and a year later a stage of confrontation with the Church was reached. The Church courageously declared that she opposed communism, and for the next ten years she became a "Church of silence" Then came a new apostolic nuncio to Cuba in the person of Bishop Cesare Zacchi, and with him a new era began. The economic blockade against Cuba to punish her because she had decided to rule by herself and chose her own government had caused much hardship to her people The apostolic nuncio made it possible for the Cuban episcopate to issue a statement denouncing the blockade (April 10, 1969):

> In the interests of our people and in service to the poor, faithful to the mandate of Jesus Christ and the commitments made at the Medellin Conference, we denounce the injustice of this blockade For it causes a great increase in unnecessary suffering, and greatly impedes the quest for development [7]

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5 Enrique DUSSEL, *History and the Theology of Liberation*, translated by John Drury, Ordis Books, 1976, p 143

6. Gustavo GUTIÉRREZ, *A Theology of Liberation*, translated and edited by Sister Caridad Inda and John Eagleson, Orbis Books, 1973, p 176.

7 E. DUSSEL, *Hist and Theol of Liberation*, p. 121

The Cuban episcopate went further and declared that cooperation between those who believed and those who did not was possible:

> In the betterment of the whole man and of all mankind there is an enormous area of shared commitment between people of good will, be they atheists or believers ..
>
> In this hour, as in every hour, we must be wise enough to detect the presence of God's Kingdom in a positive feature of the critical situation through which we are living [8]

The Church had read the signs of the times and had responded to them intelligently

A pitfall that must be seriously considered by today's social activist is the assumption that all that he does is justified merely because he has taken his place on the side of the poor In the first place, he needs to discern his goals and means, the risks and dangers to others, and whether he is furthering the Kingdom as Jesus proclaimed it in this world He must take into account what the magisterium says in order to remind himself of human values that must always be preserved In the second place, he must keep in mind that the rectitude of his decision is not guaranteed only because he finds himself in a social movement which has just goals He must decide in his own conscience whether it is the right thing for him to participate in such a social movement.

Now it could well happen that in concrete situations, those who advocate liberation theology may really be encouraging a Marxist ideology and plan of action. If the Instruction claims that this has been the general case, then it should adduce facts to back up this claim If it is said that the Instruction is speaking only about certain currents of liberation theology, then there should have been a formal acknowledgement of the other currents and their orthodoxy Instead, while seeking to point out the error involved in borrowing Marxist concepts uncritically, the Instruction has not indicated to the reader the specific liberation theologies which contain the errors it alludes to (Cf *Instruction*, XI-Orientations, 15, 17, pp 33-34)

The instruction goes on to mark out the class struggle, the political involvement of priests and substituting orthodoxy by orthopraxy as instances where it sees the Marxist ideology operative in liberation theology We shall say a few words about each.

8 *Ibid*

i. Class struggle

The Instruction understands class struggle as the foundation on which violence is built, and sees the violator and the victim as equal protagonists:

> The fundamental law of history, which is the law of the class struggle, implies that society is founded on violence To the violence which constitutes the relationship of the domination of the rich over the poor, there corresponds the counter-violence of the revolution, by means of which this domination will be reversed.[9]

However, the liberation theologians see the classes that divide society as a fact of everyday life and they perceive that not only are such divisions not God-created but that they must be eradicated. To accept "victim-hood" merely because of the threat of violence breaking out is a possible choice, but it need not be the only one a Christian can or must make. Confrontation, even as Jesus confronted his captors or Gandhiji the British Raj, can well be the choice discerned as right in the light of the Christian faith. Hence it would seem unjustified for the Instruction to declare guilty those of the oppressed who have to defend their lives by confrontation in a situation of violence. Could one tell people who are being systematically oppressed and forced to live in sub-human conditions that they must not attempt to gain their rights, that they must not bring about a confrontation for fear of violence ? The fear of violence must not make cowards of the committed

The Instruction further adopts a view of moral responsibility that seems questionable. It allows that there is "need for a radical reform of structures which conceal poverty and which are themselves forms of violence," but goes on to point out that the source of injustice is in the hearts of men. Hence,

> ..it is only by making an appeal to the *moral potential* of the person and to the constant need for interior conversion, that social change will be brought about which will truly be in the service of man [10]

Does this mean that a Christian who is oppressed by his fellow Christian must merely request his oppressor to change his ways but continue to suffer the oppression till his oppressor undergoes a change of heart ? This is not a Christian imperative, yet, neither is the annihilation of the oppressor the Christian choice Rather, if the oppressor fails to practice justice, there must be a resolute effort by the oppressed to gain their rights. This will produce confrontation, conflict and even violence.

9. *Instruction*, VIII-Subversion of the meaning of truth and violence, 6, p. 21.
10. *Instruction*, XI-Orientations, 8, p. 31.

The resolution of these should result in a society of justice, love and harmony: the realization of Christ's Kingdom. But, then, is violence justified ?

Violence is a difficult term to define. For our purpose we understand it as harm or injury done to the physical person. Such harm or injury may not be justified unless it is inflicted on the other in the process of restraining him from doing harm or injury to oneself or to another. In those cases, violence may be more properly defined as defence. From the Instruction, it is not clear what the magisterium understands by violence in the context of liberation theology; however, for the liberation theologian, violence mostly means resisting the violence of the other, or more appropriately, defence. Even Paul VI in *Populorum Progressio* (1967) had this to say concerning violence:

> We know, therefore, that a revolutionary uprising — save where there is manifest, long-standing tyranny which could do great damage to fundamental personal rights and dangerous harm to the common good of the country — produces new injustices, throws more elements out of balance and brings new disasters. A real evil should not be fought at the cost of greater misery [11]

Even in Church teaching, violence is not ruled out absolutely !

ii Political involvement

It is proper for the Church to discern the manner in which she best carries out her spiritual task. However, the Church cannot help but be involved politically. To begin with, the pope himself is the head of a state, and the Vatican receives and sends ambassadors to many nations. And the laity, in virtue of their particular vocation, are expected to take part in the political life of the state.

It is true that the spiritual mission of the Church has often been obscured when her leaders (popes and bishops) assumed to themselves temporal power, or had it thrust upon them. "Spiritual" favours could be traded for temporal sovereignty as when Pope Stephen (752-757) agreed to consecrate the sons of Pepin the Short as emperors, and threatened with excommunication any in the empire who would recognize as ruler a person outside of Pepin's family [12]. Thus did the papal states begin.

When priests have to take part in a political movement, a specific priority is put in question, the priority of a ministerial service reaching out to the whole community of faith. The ministerial office must

11. NEUNER-DUPUIS, 2147c

12. Thomas P. NEILL and Raymond H. SCHMANDT, *History of the Catholic Church*, The Bruce Milwaukee Publishing Company, 1957, p. 141

symbolize to all and sundry the forgiveness and love of God as expressed in Jesus Christ. Certain roles may make it morally impossible for a priest to exercise such an office. Hence canon law prohibits priests from assuming "public office whenever it means sharing in the exercise of civil power" (Canon 285-3). This law is not absolute, however, and national conferences of bishops have at times found it appropriate that priests occupy such offices. So the canon law should not be adduced by a bishop as the sole reason for a priest to lay down public office. It must also be shown that the proclamation of the Kingdom would be better served were the priest to desist from public office. In a fledgling nation, it may be crucial that a priest continues in public office precisely for the good of the state and the Church even if such a situation may not apply to a developed nation. Further, a priest can exercise civil power even though he does not occupy a public office. In fact, this seems to be the case with Archbishop Glemp of Poland. Is such an exercise of power justified merely because he does not hold public office, and is the same unjustified when priests, e.g. in the Nicaraguan cabinet, do ?

Of course, the question of political involvement looms large in Latin America because it concerns movements with a leftist ideology, and the Instruction is worried about whether such ideology is supplanting the Christian commitment. To an extent, the danger of forgetting one's Christian faith is real, but not really in those Latin American countries like Brazil where the bishops themselves have provided enlightened leadership It should be left to the Churches in these countries to decide the level of cooperation with governments that are admittedly Marxist.

ii. Substituting orthodoxy by orthopraxy

The Instruction charges liberation theology with assuming a closed mindset and premises which admit of no questioning. the fact that a person is committed to fight for justice on behalf of the poor justifies all his actions, and hence critical reflection in the light of God's Word and the tradition of the Church becomes superfluous.

Let us hear Gustavo Gutiérrez explaining this point.

> Faith in a God who loves us and calls us to the gift of full communion with him and brotherhood among men not only is not foreign to the transformation of the world, it leads necessarily to the building up of that brotherhood and communion in history. Moreover, only by doing this truth will our faith be "verified", in the etymological sense of the word. From this notion has recently been derived the term *orthopraxis*, understood as a proclamation of and reflection on statements considered to be true. Rather, the goal is to balance

> and even to reject the primary and almost exclusiveness which doctrine has enjoyed in Christian life and above all to modify the emphasis, often obsessive, upon the attainment of an orthodoxy which is often nothing more than fidelity to an obsolete tradition or a debatable interpretation.[13]

The liberation theologians emphasize that liberationist efforts cannot be understood by a person who discounts in practice the actual state of those who are economically oppressed. The Instruction itself corroborates this emphasis when it says:

> Likewise the experience of those who work directly for evangelization and for the advancement of the poor and the oppressed is necessary for the doctrinal and pastoral reflection of the Church In this sense, it is necessary to affirm that one becomes more aware of certain aspects of truth by starting with *praxis*, if by that one means pastoral *praxis* and social work which keeps its evangelical inspiration.[14]

It will be profitable for the Church to consider whether, in our passion for orthodoxy, we teach mere systematized or harmonized truths which have little bearing on a particular context. Orthodox doctrine proceeds from the living tradition of the Church; it cannot be a mere repetition of truths that expressed orthodoxy in ages past!

B. *The Magisterium*

The Instruction often emphasizes the need for magisterial utterances to be taken into consideration so that the doctrine of the Church be clearly known and practised Such a magisterial function is no doubt necessary although it should be understood that it is the whole Church that teaches and listens ! The magisterial office does not do away with the need for others in the Church to teach Christian doctrine. But when there is a need to know clearly and unmistakably the truth of the faith, it is for the magisterium to exercise its particular office of declaring the authentic teaching of the Church.

The fact that the magisterium is entrusted with declaring the true doctrine does not absolve it from the effort of arriving at it. Such effort needs to be made so that the doctrine which is taught is credible and authentic. Unfortunately, one finds little evidence in the Instruction of collaboration with liberation theologians. Had such collaboration existed, the rather lop-sided understanding of "class struggle", "truth" and "theology of liberation" in the Instruction would not have happened. The doctrine taught by the magisterium does not proceed from syllogistic reasoning, but from the total living tradition of the Church. Only as a result of dialogue will such teaching

13. *A Theology of Liberation*, p 10
14 *Instruction*, XI-Orientations, 13, p. 33.

become a challenge, a comfort, a proclamation of the Kingdom and of the Christian ethic. The many embarrassing decisions handed down in the past by the Biblical Commission and the inaccurate doctrinal statements that the oath against Modernism sought to maintain, were the result of a magisterium not sufficiently in dialogue with the living tradition of the Church.

An aspect of the magisterium that is becoming increasingly prominent today is the teaching sent out from the pope or the Roman congregations for the whole Church. A danger underlying such teaching is the assumption that people all over the world have the same mindset, that analogical truths of the faith do not need reinterpretation in different cultural settings, and that the Church, universal as she is, constitutes a perfect unified society. Such assumptions explain Rome's insistence that her liturgical rules be normative for the whole Church.

A possible fallout from such a way of teaching is that the significance of the local Church and the local hierarchy is minimized and perhaps disregarded. In this case, since the local hierarchy forms part of a nation, could there not be a legitimate concern on the part of the secular authorities about Christians owning extra-territorial loyalties ? The local magisterium will appear more as ambassadors of the Vatican than as pastors responsible to their people.

The Roman magisterium, in a spirit of fraternal union, and seeking to preserve the authentic tradition of the Church, could fulfil a necessary function by collating global experiences and making them available to the local hierarchies Further, it could also offer expertise as and when the local hierarchies request it. But both these functions must take place in the context of dialogue. The local magisterium must accept responsibility for teaching and proclaiming the authentic word of God in their respective regions and cultures. Even though it is Truth itself, the Word of God cannot be seen as truth unless it assumes the currency of human language (localized and time-bound). Dogmas and doctrines of the universal Church need to be interpreted by the local Churches.

The meaningful role of the local magisterium includes the task of teaching and clarifying the Christian faith for believers This is not realized only by propounding or exposing new conceptual understandings of doctrine. It will include recognizing in other faiths and in other communities those dynamics which are present in the Christian faith. This is the basis of the dialogue encouraged and fostered

in the wake of Vatican II.[15] Thus, the Church and other religious communities can mutually contribute to the consolidation and enriching of their respective faith experiences. A task of the local magisterium would then be to deepen the Church's experience of Christ through dialogue.

When new culturally conditioned movements arise, the local magisterium is called to do more than merely cite past Church doctrine or canon law. A deep understanding of the movement, which is more than an intellectual grasp, must precede the magisterium's decision as to whether such movement is in keeping with the Christian proclamation or not. Liberation theology is one such movement.

C. Desacralization

The Instruction asserts that according to the liberation theologians not only is the spiritual gospel reduced to an earthly one, but the sacrament of the Eucharist is reduced to the celebration of a social struggle. In doing so, the Instruction feels that the sacral aspect of the Eucharist is neglected

But there is no intrinsic contradiction between a social struggle being celebrated in the Eucharistic cult and the cult remaining an act of worship and a saving deed of God Social struggle can be part of a person's daily life precisely because one experiences God's call to men and women inviting them to live in freedom and human dignity. Such struggles will constitute the gift that is joined to Christ's. The Christian's fidelity to God's call will imply the obligation to confront the oppressing classes which rob him or her, or the neighbours, of a God-given dignity This will give substance to the Eucharistic worship

Second, if Christian liberation is to be visible, tangible and experienced by the total person, it cannot take place solely in an internal act of "conversion of heart" External change must go along with such conversion

Third, the sacramental system in the Church is an enduring reminder that the event of grace is communitarian it must be celebrated in the Church through a sacramental rite In this sacramental rite, the life context of the Christians is symbolized and they are enabled to enter the paschal mystery of Jesus himself. Through this symbolic participation, Christians affirm their commitment to God, offer their

15 Cf the Pastoral Instruction on the means of Social Communication, *Communio et Progressio*, 29 January, 1971, nos 122-125, On Dialogue with unbelievers, *Humanae Personae Dignitas*, 28 August, 1968.

life's works to Him, and acknowledge the proclamation of the Kingdom as a believing community. The sacrament is illustrative of the tension that exists between the initiative of God promising his grace to men and women in their human existence, and their efforts to express this initiative of God in themselves and their life's achievements. Traditionally, these efforts to respond to God's initiative were seen as the response of the recipient. This response must be made in the world which we perceive and understand through the social sciences and their analyses. It is these analyses that make known to us the extent of freedom and dignity a person enjoys Should there be consistent evidence that the oppressing class intends doing nothing to bring about a humane and a dignified existence for the oppressed, it can hardly be unchristian or unjust for the local magisterium to decide that the minimum condition for celebrating the Eucharist is lacking. The Church magisterium uses the same principle when it says that those who contract invalid marriages may not approach the Eucharist. Is it not proper for the Ordinary in certain circumstances to prohibit the celebration of the Eucharist in a church ? If a Christian insisted on keeping a slave today, would he not be forbidden from approaching the Eucharist ? Obviously, a careful discernment must precede such a decision because it must be remembered that the moments for God's grace occur when least expected But the principle is valid.

Should the Eucharist be viewed as a purely cultic act and be without a necessary base in the community, then such a Eucharist would not qualify even as a sacrament For such a sacrament has distanced itself from the Incarnation and has probably lost its efficacy for celebrating the incarnated Christ in the Christian community.

Conclusion

We have reflected on some aspects of liberation theology which the Instruction sees as causing confusion in the minds of the faithful. We have also noted its grounds for suggesting certain cautions. While accepting that in any new enterprise cautions are in place, it does seem at times that the Instruction is overly fearful of a Christian liberation struggle being infested by Marxist ideology. The Instruction could have shown more awareness of documents like the Rockefeller Report (1969) which described the Church in Latin America as a threat to American investments.[16]

16 "Quality of Life in the Americas — Report of a Presidential Mission for the Western Hemisphere," *Department of State Bulletin*, 8 December 1969, p 18. Quoted in *Puebla and Beyond*, edited by John EAGLESON and Philip SCHARPER, Orbis Books, 1979, p 26, footnote 27.

A spirit of dialogue could have been more in evidence in the Instruction as it questions the understanding and practice of liberation theology. The result is that the doctrines of liberation theology are unnecessarily seen as suspect, and some bishops have taken this to mean that liberation theology is the chief danger to today's Church. The Instruction should have avoided using innuendo in making its points:

> We should recall that the preferential option described at *Puebla* is two-fold: for the poor and *for the young*. It is significant that the option for the young has in general been passed over in total silence [17]

The Instruction avoids mentioning where the "significance" lies Such vagueness casts aspersions on the theologians in question and offers little possibility to reply.

Is it the case that the Roman magisterium is repeating the errors of the past ? Is it perhaps seeking to pronounce on that which it has little experience of ? And is it oblivious of the way it favours the Latin American oppressors ? Teaching is the primary function of the magisterium But its knowledge must be arrived at by the Church in dialogue with the world, and by discerning her function as the official witness of God's salvation in the history of the world The Church herself is the sacrament of God's love in this world but always as a historical reality, and hence finite, faltering, fallible; but in spite of this, the Church knows that she bears witness to the truth of Jesus Christ because of the Spirit present in her midst.

The Instruction teaches us that sin is in the hearts of men and women and that there is need for change through a "conversion of heart". There would also be a need to recognize the structural sin in society and hence the necessity of radical reform of structures; and the Instruction could have emphasized the need for structural reform and the way of achieving it as much as it does demand a "conversion of heart"

Finally, the cultic celebration of the Eucharist must never distance itself from the activity of concrete existence, else the sacrament is drained of its nature of being the visibility of God's action in the lives of men and women Grace will be victorious not in the perfectly formulated dogma or doctrine of the Church but in her members who struggle and strain forward to the prize: freedom and dignity in Jesus Christ

17 *Instruction*, VI-A New Interpretation of Christianity, 6, p 16.

Book Notices

Spirituality

Streams of Grace. A New Selection from the letters of the Abbé DE TOURVILLE. *Collins, Fountain Paperbacks* 1985. Pp. 94 £ 1 50.

The Abbé de Tourville (1842-1903), besides being a sociologist and the founder of the review *La Science sociale*, was also a remakable spiritual figure of his time, and his letters to an intelligent and self-diffident young nun and to other correspondents contain valuable spiritual advise Extracts are offered in this booklet, edited and translated by Robin Waterfield, together with a biographical introduction. A similar selection, slightly larger and classified, had been published in 1939 by the Dacre Press, Westminster, under the title *Letters of Direction*, a book reprinted many times.

Walking on Thorns. A Call to Christian Obedience. By Allan BOESAK *Grand Rapids, Michigan, W E Eerdmans Pub Co*, 1984 Pp x-65. No price given (Available from the Paternoster Press, Exeter)

A minister of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church in South Africa, Allan Boesak represents today, together with Desmond Tutu, the spearhead of the black leadership against Apartheid This book contains seven sermons preached in 1983 and one letter sent to the South African Minister of Justice in 1979, on the common theme of Christian obedience to God rather than to human beings The pieces are marked by the political realism and powerful use of the Word of God characteristic of Boesak (cf VIDYAJYOTI, 1984, p 59) His rejection of the Minister of Justice's claim that "pastors and churches should keep out of politics" is particularly relevant.

Spiritual Aids for those in Renew. Ponderings, Poems, Promises By Most Rev Robert F MORNEAU *New York, Alba House*, 1984 Pp viii-111 $ 2 95.

This book contains a collection of short pieces for a diocesan renewal programme organised in Newark and other US dioceses, and lasting for a period of five terms The bishop of Green Bay offers here his reflections and poems, together with poems by Barbara J Holt and Brother Eduard Seifert, F S C The themes are grouped under five heterogeneous headings God's Call, Our Response, Empowerment of the Spirit, Discipleship, and Evangelization There are discussion questions for each heading The public envisaged is, of course, North American

A Bouquet of Pastoral and Practical Talks. Collected, contributed, edited and published by Fr M CHACKO, S J *Trivandrum, St Xavier's College*, 1985 Pp 436 Rs 60

Fr Chacko has published in the past several collections of homilies by different people on many topics Here we have more than 50 talks, seminar papers, historical notes on shrines, and other pieces, apparently published on the principle that whatever is spoken in public is worth printing The book is somewhat expensive for the fare it provides More than half of the contents are written by Fr Chacko himself.

A Gift of God, or Andavan Picchai. By Smt Radha and Dr Krishna RAO. *Shivanandanagar, U P, The Divine Life Society*, 1983 Pp xviii-173 Rs 15

This is the life story of a Tamil mystic, a woman born in 1899 of a brahmin family of Mylapore, named at birth Maragathavalli, daughter of T Sankaranarayan Sastri, and now known as Andavan Picchai or the Gift of God She lives as a sannyasini at the Sivananda Ashram in Rishikesh and the story is semi-autobiographical, her recollections having been taken down by the two devotees that figure as authors. Besides being a poet and a singer (she is said to have composed hymns in Tamil, in Telugu and in Sanskrit), Andavan Picchai has charismatic gifts of healing and vision, and radiates the divine presence around her Devotees will profit and be inspired to faith by the life of a person who is led by God from her infancy

Come, Let Us Celebrate. By I. PUTHIADAM, S.J. (ed.). 3rd edition. *Bangalore, Asian Trading Corporation*, 1985. Pp. xvi-293. Rs. 40.

The fact that a third edition of this book on "Meeting God in Christian and non-Christian Feasts" (subtitle of the book) has been necessary shows that it meets a felt need. Fully Christian in its outlook, the book is useful for the celebration of most of the festivals in this country. The third edition reproduces in a more compact printing and handier size the second edition (cf. VIDYAJYOTI, 1981, p. 556) which enlarged on the first edition (cf. VIDYAJYOTI, 1976, pp. 285f).

Asian Religions

Inculturation, Liberation, Dialogue. Challenges to Christian Theology in Asia Today By George M SOARES-PRABHU, S J *Pune, Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth*, 1984 Pp. ii-42 n p

This is a beautiful and lucid essay on the theology of religions as it is to be done today in Asia, and on the contributions of Asian theology to the Church Extremely well-informed, as it is always the case with Soares-Prabhu, brilliantly summarised, the essay should find wide circulation and be put in the hands of all students of theology in Asia The 16 pages of footnotes offer ample scope for further reading in an area that is vital to all theology today The call for an Asian Christology should find committed response from our theologians

Begegnung mit dem Hinduismus. Eine Einführung By Peter SCHREINER *Freiburg im B*, *Herder*, 1984 Pp 128 DM 7 90

This booklet gives an insightful introduction to the issues regarding the meeting of Hinduism and the West The first chapter gives the historical background Vivekananda, Gandhi, Radhakrishnan, and the landmarks of the history of British colonialism, the modern missionary enterprise in India and the development of Orientalism The next chapter treats of some of the most important exports of Hinduism to the West Yoga, TM, Hare Krishna, Tantra and Rajneesh The third chapter speaks of Hinduism in its social expression (caste, rites, feasts, sacraments, pilgrimage, etc) and the last chapter gives shortly some of the philosophical and theological structures of Hinduism and its sacred sources A useful introduction to the Hindu world for the German speaking visitor to India (Only Germans can be instructed that *jnāna*- is pronounced "dschnjána"! p 112)

A Hundred Letters. By SHARAFUDDIN MANERI Translation, Introduction and Notes by Paul Jackson, S J *Bombay, Better Yourself Books*, 1985 Pp xx-458 Rs 34

This is an Indian Offset reprint of a book published originally in 1980 in the series *The Classics of Western Spirituality* Fr C Troll gave an account of this important spiritual treasure of Indian Sufism in his review article of VIDYAJYOTI 45 (1981) 344-47 We are grateful to Fr Jackson for the very readable translation and to the Paulist Fathers for providing us with a quite cheap Indian edition of the book Like in the parent edition, there is a slight mistake in the numeration of the notes (alas, printed, as usual, at the end of the book !) in the text itself the note calls jump from 63 (on p 194) to 65 (on p 205) In the notes at the end of the book the numbers do not jump and so from note 64 to the end, note 115, they are one digit behind the number of the respective call in the text The Pope's encomium on the back cover is quite irrelevant to the content of the book

Going Forth. Missionary Consciousness in Third World Catholic Churches By Omer DEGRIJSE, C I C M *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis*, 1984 Pp xiv-98. $ 6 95

This is a study of the missionary activity of the church in Asia, Africa and Latin America in recent years The focus is not so much theological as practical The study is based on objective data and statistics of missionary activity by the church in the various countries studied After the section on India (pp 42-49) the Belgian author says "India has become the most important missionary country of the Third Church And this is but a beginning We can foresee that in the future India will be one of the most important evangelizing countries The apostolic potential of the Indian Catholic Church is more important than that of any other Third World church It can avail itself of the dynamism and spiritual wealth of the Indian people "

G GISPERT-SAUCH, S J

Vidyajyoti

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In This Issue

As we approach the date of the visit of John Paul II to India, the Catholic community needs to prepare for it and to reflect on the significance of the event. Archbishop Simon PIMENTA outlines for us what are the values and potentialities of this pastoral visit. The article of the American Bishop Kenneth UNTENER focuses on the correct theological understanding of the relationship between the local and the universal Church, and between the pope and the bishops. Such a correct understanding is necessary for the visit to take place in an atmosphere of truth and to be fruitful in terms of a greater fidelity to the Gospel pespectives, to which as Christians we are committed.

The UN sponsored International Year of the Youth is well advanced We are happy this month to offer to our readers a solid study by Fr R J RAJA who gleans nutritious seeds of truth from the Biblical field They can give greater content to our discussions on and with the Youth. Young people are called by God's Word to be open to growth, to be prophets of change, to be filled with that biblical *parresia* whereby visions are transformed into earthly realities.

With the end of the monsoon period in most parts of India we, together with our compatriots, enter into a festive period of much celebration and joy This is a good opportunity to reflect on the joy of God and the "God of my joy" (Ps 43). Fr G. GISPERT-SAUCH takes the help of recent NT studies and of the older Indian tradition to lead us into a theological reflection on this theme, telling us that joy may be uncovered even in the midst of suffering.

The report of the Vatican Delegation to the UN convention on Population, printed in our Documentation section, shows the many problems involved in this important question. Without pretending to give a complete picture of this complex issue, the report offers useful guidelines for a deeper and fruitful Christian involvement in the solution of this grave problem.

The Pope's Visit

Simon I. PIMENTA*

Archbishop of Bombay

THE announcement on Easter Sunday, April 7 1985, that the Holy Father Pope John Paul II would visit India in February 1986 evoked much interest and enthusiasm. It was not unexpected, for speculation had been rife that the Pope, who since his election in 1978 has undertaken so far 26 international journeys to countries in the five continents, would visit India which has the second largest Catholic population in Asia and the seventeenth in the world The Pope comes at the invitation of the President Giani Zail Singh on behalf of the Government and people of India and also of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India which has repeatedly invited the Holy Father since 1980 While, therefore, being a state visit, it will also be an exercise of his universal pastoral ministry.

Pope John Paul II

Elected in 1978, after the short pontificate of Pope John Paul I, the present Holy Father is the first ever Polish Pope and the first non-Italian for 450 years, and has been hailed as a truly remarkable man, an international charismatic figure who has captured the minds and hearts of millions throughout the world. No other religious leader has ever travelled so extensively or been seen by so many people John Paul II projects the image of a leader who is strong, who is full of vitality, who inspires all with religious optimism.

The Papal Visit

Pope John XXIII made a mild break with tradition, inasmuch as he made a few trips in Italy itself With Pope Paul VI, who made his historic visit to Bombay, on the occasion of the International Eucharistic Congress in 1964, and Pope John Paul II, the style of the Papacy has changed Hence forward it is not only the Bishops of the churches who would go to Rome, but the Bishop of Rome would go round the churches.

*The Most Rev Simon PIMENTA, is the President of the CBCI

The significance of John Paul's visit to India can best [illegible] from his own statements explaining the purpose and meaning of his ceaseless journeys. In undertaking these journeys, he sees himself as implementing the decrees of Vatican II and fulfilling his own duty and responsibility as pastor of the universal Church. One of his clearest statements was made on the occasion of his visit to Africa:

> It can be said that this journey or pilgrimage is nothing but the implementation, that is, the introduction into practical life of the doctrine of Vatican II. That might perhaps surprise some people, but it is precisely so. The doctrine of the council is not in fact a collection of abstract concepts and formulations on the subject of the Church, but a deep and global teaching on the life of the Church. This life of the Church is a mission in which through the history of every man and at the same time through the history of nations and generations the eternal mystery of God's love and Christ's is realised.
>
> This has become a fundamental dimension of the living faith of every Christian, an essential characteristic of every particular Church, of every diocese. It has also become a specific and appropriate way of carrying out the particular mission of the Bishop of Rome. It seems that after Vatican II he cannot accomplish his service in any other way but by going out towards men, therefore, towards peoples and nations".[1]

Symbol of Unity

"The Roman Pontiff, as the successor of Peter, is the perpetual and visible source and foundation of the unity both of the bishops and of the whole company of faithful" (*LG*, 23). A particular task of the papacy is to serve universal unity. This is the specific office and charism of the papacy. Christ left to Peter the charge of his flock: "Feed my lambs. Feed my sheep" (Jn 21:16-17). "I have prayed for you that your faith may never fail. You in turn must strengthen your brothers" (Lk 23:32).

No need has been more deeply felt in church and country than unity. In the last few years, the Church has experienced racking tensions and symptoms of divisions arising from different ideologies and varying interpretations of Vatican II. Healthy criticism and pluralism of thought are welcome. But when they are destructive and alien to the accepted teaching of the Church, the unity of the Church suffers. The country also is faced with a bewildering array of problems and challenges: it is in the throes of a crisis which threatens not only the welfare and prosperity of the people but the peace, stability, unity and integrity of the nation. Within the country there are tensions, divisions and conflicts — religious, ethnic, class — which led to the tragic events

1. *L'Osservatore Romano* (*OR*), May 26, 1980.

in the closing months of 1984 and which continue to erupt in violence that disturbs the country to an alarming extent. To this must be added the ever present economic inequality which creates insuperable divisions between the rich and the masses of the destitute and constitutes a continuous source of conflict and danger to all.

The very presence of John Paul should be for us the sign and hope of the unity which is necessary to solve the manifold problems which beset church and country. It will not be expected of the Pope to offer concrete solutions to political and social problems which often lead to divisions and disunity. "Christ, to be sure, gave His church no mission in the political, economic or social order. The purpose which he set before her is a religious one. But out of the religious mission itself came a function, a light and an energy which serve to structure and consolidate the human community according to the divine law" (*GS*, 42) The Pope could apply the healing touch through a process of reconciliation to which he frequently refers It was the theme of the Holy Year 1983 and of the last Synod of Bishops in 1983, and he has reverted often to it in important messages to the Catholic world. In Britain, he said:

> At this moment of history, we stand in urgent need of reconciliation, reconciliation between nations and nations and between peoples of different races and cultures, reconciliation of man within himself and with nature, reconciliation between people of different social conditions and beliefs, reconciliation between Christians In a world scarred by hatred and injustice and divided by violence and oppression the Church desires to be a spokesman for the vital task of fostering harmony and unity, and of forging new bonds of understanding and brotherhood.[2]

The visit of Pope John Paul II will undoubtedly fortify this hope, and encourage our people in their efforts towards justice, development and peace. Likewise, it is our conviction that as in many other countries that he has visited, so also in India, he will help to strengthen the religious spirit of our people.

The Pope and the Laity

For Catholics the Pope is the successor of Peter, the visible sign and principle of unity in the universal Church. The presence in our midst of the representative of Christ cannot but stir us both emotionally and spiritually and help us grow in the love of Christ and his Church. There is, of course, the danger of a temporary passing wave of enthusiasm, but that only underlines the need of a proper spiritual preparation. Given this, there is every reason to hope that through this visit of the

2. *OR*, May 31, 1982.

Holy Father, the Church in India will be strengthened in faith and hope, and be moved to greater service.

In particular, the papal visit should be of great benefit to our youth. John Paul II has a way with young people and fires their enthusiasm wherever he goes. The youth of India is still God-fearing and God-loving but this characteristic is being gradually eroded. With his charismatic appeal to youth, John Paul could arrest the process of erosion and bring the best out our young people.

The Pope and the Bishops

It is planned that the Pope will meet the Catholic Bishops of India as a body, and this should be one of the highlights of his visit. It is a meeting to which in all his travels abroad he has given great importance, for nowhere else is the collegiality of Bishops and the primacy of the Pope so clearly and visibly seen; nowhere else is his specific task to strengthen his brethren more clearly fulfilled. In his homilies to Bishops, he has stressed the importance of unity and purity of doctrine:

> Your pastoral service of truth is completed by a like service of unity Unity will be, first of all, unity among yourselves, the Bishops "We must guard and keep this unity", the Bishop St Cyprian wrote in a moment of grave threats to communion between the Bishops of his country, "especially us Bishops who preside over the Church, in order to give witness that the episcopate is one and indivisible. Let no one mislead the faithful or alter the truth. The episcopate is one" (*De Ecclesiae Catholicae Unitate*, 6-8). This unity comes ... from on high. . It must be more and more close and solid.[3]

The Pope recalled that "John XXIII in convoking the Vatican Council knew that what was needed was a pastoral council but with a strong doctrinal basis. The greatest concern of the Ecumenical Council is this that the sacred deposit of Christian doctrine should be more effectively guarded and taught".[4]

The function of the Bishop of Rome is stressed in his address to the Bishops of England and of the United States, when he recalled his own labours as a Bishop in Poland, before his election to the papacy. "The Bishops as a Conference know the solidarity of the Bishop of Rome with you in prayer and fraternal love. And as members of the worldwide college of Bishops, you know that you have the support of the successor of the Apostle Peter".[5] In other words, the papacy exists for the sake of the Church and not vice versa. The Pope is the visible sign and source of unity of the whole Church.

3. *OR*, February 5, 1979.
4. *OR*, October 29, 1979.
5. *OR*, May 31, 1982.

Similarly, in his homily to the American bishops, he said:

> This is *an hour of ecclesial communion* and fraternal love. I come to you as a brother Bishop: one who, like yourselves, has known the challenges of the local church; one who has worked within the structure of a diocese.... And today. . I, your brother in Jesus, now come to you as successor of Peter on the See of Rome and therefore as Pastor of the whole Church.
>
> Because of my personal pastoral responsibility, and because of our common pastoral responsibility for the people of God..., I desire to strengthen you in your ministry of faith as local Pastors, and to support you in your individual and joint pastoral activities by encouraging you to stand fast in the holiness and truth of Our Lord Jesus Christ...the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls" (1 Pt 2:25).[6]

These close and intimate meetings with the Bishop of Rome, the centre of unity, cannot but foster a spirit of unity and fellowship among the Bishops of the local chunches not only in matters of doctrine but also in the search for a solution to the many problems that confront them.

The Pope and Dialogue

For the first time Pope John Paul II will come in contact with the Indian reality — the teeming millions in a mosaic of different religions, languages and cultures. Despite the diversity of religion and language there runs through the fabric of the nation the golden thread of basic innate unity

Religious dialogue in the sense of an interaction between Christianity and other religions is not something new in this country. There have been in the past, and there are more and more today individual persons and groups, centres and ashrams, which practise inter-religious dialogue in various ways — get-together, courses, live-ins. But such dialogue has not yet been taken up seriously by the larger communities of the Church in India. Self-sufficiency and isolation seem to be still the prevalent attitudes. The Church in India also strives to promote unity among the Christian Churches. Here too the efforts have been sporadic and unity seems as distant as ever before.

John Paul is a man of dialogue. His attitude is one of respect for the truth which others than Christians also possess. In his first encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*, the Pope speaks of the belief of the followers of non-Christian religions as being "the effect of the Spirit of truth operating outside the visible confines of the Mystical Body".[7] And

6. *OR*, October 29, 1979
7. *Redemptor Hominis*, 6.

elsewhere he says, that the Holy Spirit "is mysteriously present in [illegible] Christian religions and cultures."[8] The Pope urges Christians to come into closer harmony with representatives of other religions through "dialogue, contacts, prayer in common, investigations of the treasures of human spirituality, in which, as we know well, the members of these religions are not lacking."[9]

The need for inter-religious dialogue in our country cannot be over-emphasised. There is perhaps no other nation in which so many religions co-exist side by side. India has been and is the home of the great religions of the world. India has had a reputation for religious tolerance though a change seems to be taking place — religion seems now to be the cause of many tensions and strifes, even violent disturbances and upheavals, in several parts of the country. There is springing up among us an attitude of religious intolerance. In such an atmosphere, the Christian is called to play the role of a unifier. His approach to those of other faiths should, therefore, be multi-faceted, including not only formal and theological dialogue but also a shared experience of prayer and the effort to become aware of the values and insights contained in their spiritual traditions. In an address at a meeting of the Secretariat for non-Christians, Pope John Paul stated: "Respect and esteem for the other and for what he has in the depths of his heart is essential to dialogue." He cites St Paul's readiness to become all things to all men for the sake of the gospel and stresses that any dialogue can only be constructive and fruitful if there is love for those with whom we converse. "The only truly perfect speech is that spoken in love"[10] The visit of the Pope will surely create a climate of good will, dispel fears, and stress that Christian values are not opposed to national interests.

Conclusion

Wherever John Paul travels he draws large crowds and it is safe to predict that he will be enthusiastically welcomed in India. In the 20th century the papacy "appears as a world power of the spirit, which proclaims the word of God and serves the cause of justice and peace in our unjust and gravely threatened world."[11] The Papacy also appears as an institution that is deeply involved in the development of nations, an institution that admires the world and strives not to dominate but to serve it, not to despise it but to increase its dignity, not to con-

8. *OR*, March 26, 1982.
9. *Redemptor Hominis*, 6.
10. *OR*, April 28, 1979.
11. *Sacramentum Mundi*, Vol. 5, p. 60.

demn it but to sanctify it. The Church is a servant Church. John Paul II is in an extraordinary manner the embodiment of these truths. His visit to India will provide the Church with the spiritual strength and optimism necessary to meet the challenges of our times, maintain the unity which is the source of that strength, and give a fresh impulse to continue the mission of Christ in terms of committed renewal not only during the days of his visit but also in the coming years so important for the future of the Church and country.

Biography

A Martyr for the Truth. Jerzy Popieluszko By Grazyna SIKORSKA. *Glasgow, Collins*, 1985. Pp x-134. £ 1 95.

The name of the young Fr Popieluszko (1947-1984) was flashed around the world in October last year when he disappeared and later was known to have been murdered with the connivance if not the encouragement of the Polish authorities. The story profoundly saddened all those who had hopes that the socialist vision of life could add a human dimension to our competitive world. This early biography is by a Polish immigrant in England. She works in the centre for the study of religion in Communist lands Here she puts together the available evidence and the testimony of friends about the priest whose name has been closely associated, like that of Walesa, with the Solidarity movement. However, he always maintained that his work was religious, not political. A friend of his said, "A political priest is one who is intimidated by the police and retreats into silence." Fr Jerzy's passionate concern for God and his fellow men led him only in one direction: along the road of the cross to Calvary (p x) An inspiring book for today.

Only One Way Up. By Kristine GIBBS. *London, Darton, Longman & Todd*, 1981 Pp viii-168. £ 3 95. (Available from the Examiner Press Bookshop, 35 Dalal Street, Bombay 1)

This is the autobiographical account of a rehabilitation journey of a woman who in 1974 suffered a second major cerebral haemorrhage at the age of 26 and survived a gruelling operation and overcame the loss of movement and speech with enormous personal effort The story of this journey up is a tale of determination, frustrations, and of faith She describes, beautifully the much love she received and exposes the callousness with which both individuals and institutions (hospitals, Government services, etc) often meet disabled persons and frustrate their enormous efforts to reach normalcy. The book is a touching account by a person who has lived this struggle *from inside* and who, because she is a professional social worker, is able to bring out elements that would escape the average observer. The book should be read by health ministers, and as a testimony of personal faith, can be inspiring for any one.

Marcello dei lebbrosi. By Piero GHEDDO. *Milan, Editoriale, Nova*, 2nd edition 1985. Pp. 319 Lirae 15 000

Barely three months after the first edition in December 1984, the second edition of this biography of "the Good Man of Brazil" is offered to the Italian public. Dr Marcello Candia (1916-1983), middle of the five children of a rich industrialist family, in the midst of the economic boom of post-war Italy sold his industrial firm of chemicals and went to spend his wealth and his life among the lepers and the poor of the Brazilian Amazone valley. A man of great goodness and many abilities he is presented here as a model of the lay missionary, indeed a living example of an authentic lay spirituality.

G. G.-S.

Local Church and Universal Church

Kenneth E. UNTENER*

THREE stories illustrate the way many people view Church structure.

1. I gave a talk entitled "The Role of the Catholic Bishop" to an ecumenical group Using an overhead projector I pointed out the difference between the church as a worldwide corporation with a central headquarters in Rome and the church as a communion of dioceses. A local newspaper erroneously quoted me as saying: "The Pope is the Pope of Rome, not the Pope of the world." Catholic readers had a range of reactions: Those familiar with theology figured it was a misquote, average Catholics were confused and militant conservatives were indignant. The newspaper was kind enough to publish a correction (a tape of my talk was available), which accurately read: "The Pope is the Bishop of Rome, not the bishop of the world as though the world were all one diocese" Catholic readers had a range of reactions: Those familiar with theology had their puzzle solved, average Catholics remained confused and militant conservatives remained indignant.

For most Catholics the correct statement was as much of a problem as the incorrect one. It was absolutely orthodox and faithful to our traditions, but it was in conflict with popular Catholic thinking. All of which indicates that popular Catholic thinking on this matter is not entirely orthodox.

2 A first-grade youngster was chatting with me in the vestibule after Mass He said he knew who I was and pointed to my picture on the wall. Then to demonstrate the breadth of his knowledge he said, pointing to the Pope's picture, "He's your boss and ," pointing to my picture, "you're Father Ed's boss," and pointing to Father Ed's picture, "he's Bonnie's boss" (I later found that Bonnie was the parish secretary) Rather than try to nuance his ecclesiology, I decided to shake his hand.

Actually, his "picture ecclesiology" was a remarkably accurate explanation of the popular Catholic view of the divine "chain of

*The Rt Rev Kenneth E UNTENER, Diocesan Bishop of Saginaw, Mich, in the U S A, holds a doctorate in theology from the Gregorian University in Rome This article is reprinted from AMERICA 151/10 (October 13, 1984), with permission of America Press, Inc, 106 West 56th Street, New York, NY 10019.

command": God, Christ, Pope, Bishop, Priest and laity. The fact that this view is false has not prevented it from taking deep root in popular Catholic thought.

3. I was teaching a two-day workshop on ecclesiology, and I posed this imaginary problem for the group. "Suppose there were a nuclear holocaust and only four Catholic dioceses remained in the whole world: Bombay, Green Bay, Saskatoon and Manila. Each had its own bishop, the only four bishops left in the world. In terms of church order, what is the first thing you would do ?"

They responded: "Elect a Pope." They then developed an election process Using this process they elected an imaginary priest from Bombay, had him ordained a bishop and then installed as Pope.

I asked what diocese he would have. "None", they responded. "He's in charge of the whole church."

I pointed out that the Pope is the bishop of a diocese, who also exercises a special responsibility towards the other dioceses of the world Since, in my imaginary case, all four dioceses had bishops, what the group should have done was simply elect one of them to fulfill the papal responsibility by taking the role of Peter among the bishops.

The thought had never crossed their minds.

Traditional Popular Ecclesiology

People popularly view the Catholic Church as a corporation with the Pope as the chief executive officer, Rome as the headquarters and bishops as branch managers around the world. Or they see it as a religious empire directed by an absolute sovereign. Traditional ecclesiology is quite different from this popular view, and now that traditional teachings and practices regarding collegiality, subsidiarity and local church are gradually being reemphasized, the people in the pew are likely to become very confused. We need to communicate a more accurate (and traditional) ecclesiology.

Sometimes this can be achieved simply by taking a different starting point. Our Western theology tends to start with the universal church and then see local churches as concrete realizations of this. Eastern theology, on the other hand, starts with local church as the fundamental reality and then sees the universal church as a reality realized by the communion of local churches. The difference may seem subtle, but it can have a major effect on our thinking.

Yves Congar, O.P., also borrowing from Eastern theology, suggested that we use the analogy of the Trinity to understand local church and

universal church. Catholics learned in their catechism lessons that each Person of the Trinity is truly distinct from the other and is truly and fully God. In the same way, each distinct local church is truly and fully church. We also learned that the Three Divine Persons, while distinct from and equal to one another, share one and the same divine nature. In the same way, each local Church, while distinct and equal as church, participates in one and the same universal church. There is an order within the Trinity, but this does not mean that any Person is less fully God. There is an order within the church, but this does not mean that any local church is less fully church.

Another helpful approach is to examine the titles "Vicar of Christ" and "Vicar of Peter". People tend to think that the title "Vicar of Christ" belongs exclusively to the Pope, more or less along the lines of the chain of command outlined by that youngster in the vestibule. Vatican II points out that the term "Vicar of Christ" applies to every bishop who leads a diocese. The distinctive title of the Pope is "Vicar of Peter". The opening prayer of the Mass for a deceased Pope reads: "May your servant, our Pope, Vicar of Peter .." The prayer after Communion of the same Mass describes his Petrine role: "You made him the center of unity of your church on earth". There is a significant difference between the Pope's relating to the bishops of the world as sole Vicar of Christ (and therefore source of all power and authority) or as Vicar of Peter (and therefore the center of unity).

The above clarification of titles touches on the heart of the Vatican II teaching on collegiality People generally tend to think that all apostolic authority resides exclusively in the Pope, who then delegates it to other bishops. The truth of the matter is that apostolic authority rests in the entire college of bishops in union with the Holy Father. Neither the Pope, nor an individual bishop, nor a group of bishops could claim to possess the fullness of apostolic authority apart from the entire college of bishops Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger wrote in *The Episcopate and the Primacy*: "A Pope who would excommunicate the entire episcopate could never exist, for a church which had become only Roman would no longer be Catholic. And conversely, a lawful episcopate which would excommunicate the Pope could never exist, since a Catholicity which renounces Rome would no longer be Catholic."

One way to appreciate this teaching is to think of the original apostolic college. What was the source of their apostolic authority ? Did it come from Peter, or did it come from the Lord ? Did it reside in one of them or did it reside in the entire body as a college ? Clearly, it came from the Lord, and it rested in all of them as a college. Peter had a special unifying role. He was the rock of unity, he was called

upon to strengthen his brothers, but he was not the source of their authority. The same is true of the college of bishops today, and of the role of the Vicar of Peter.

The Shift toward Centralization

There was a time in the early history of the church when there was only a small number of dioceses, no canon law, no curia and very few external structures connecting the Diocese of Rome to the other dioceses. There was internal unity but much external diversity Each bishop exercised fully responsibility for his own diocese, while remaining in communion with the college of bishops, particularly through communion with the Bishop of Rome Almost all the things that today require a dispensation from or clearance from Rome were handled by the local bishop with his priests and ministers.

As the number of dioceses increased (there are approximately 2,350 today) unity became more difficult The exercise of some responsibilities that belonged to the local bishop was reserved to the Bishop of Rome. The reason was clear and simple: there are some things that ought to be done together for the sake of unity.

Over the course of centuries, more and more of these local responsibilities were reserved to the Bishop of Rome. This trend toward centralization, which received great impetus in the 11th century, has continued right up to our own time It reached its peak just before the Second Vatican Council.

Most people today do not realize this. They have known it only at its peak. What they regard as normal centralization is actually unparalleled in all church history. Having experienced the peak of centralization, recent generations of Catholics quite understandably think of the church as a large corporation with headquarters in Rome and "branch offices" around the world.

The perception of the Pope as one who exercises a role that is above the church itself is illustrated by an incident that occured during the writing of the crucial chapter on collegiality in "Lumen Gentium", the constitution on the church. During the preparation of this chapter the Pope suggested to the theological commision of the council that it insert in the text the phrase that the Pope is "answerable to God alone" After considering this, the commission responded that this would be an over-simplification in as much as "the Roman Pontiff is also bound to revelation itself, to the fundamental structure of the church, to the sacraments, to the definitions of earlier councils and other obligations too numerous to mention."

A bishop in an individual diocese does what he thinks is best for that local church. He tries to implement his best pastoral judgement in consultation with others, lay and ordained. The bishop of Rome exercises that kind of leadership for the Diocese of Rome. His leadership of the universal church, however, is somewhat different, for the world is not all one diocese. The Bishop of Rome, in relationship to the universal church, is called upon to implement not his own pastoral judgment, but what he believes to be essential and/or important to the unity of the dioceses.

This very important distinction is often misunderstood. The Pope, as Bishop of the Diocese of Rome, makes certain regulations for that diocese, based on his own pastoral and practical judgment If the world were all one diocese, then those regulations would automatically apply throughout the world. But such is not the case. Regulations given to the Diocese of Rome do not automatically apply to the 2,350 dioceses of the world. In 1959, for example, Pope John XXIII decided to convene a council. He also convened a synod for his diocese, which made its own regulations affecting only the church of Rome. There are two different principles: one has to do with a pastoral judgment about the best way to do things; the other has to do with what is essential and/or important for unity.

When regulations are made for the universal church, they contain an implicit clause: "It is essential and/or important for the unity of the church that..." The principle behind such regulations is not simply pastoral judgement about the best way to do things. That judgment belongs to the local bishop. Rather, the principle is unity.

This concern for and ministry to unity includes many things that go beyond heresy. There is, for example, the impact of one local church (or group of churches) on others. The Pope also has the important role of calling the bishops together and acting as head of the college when they come together. When necessary, the Pope is also the arbiter of differences among bishops In all of these cases the Pope is exercising his role as Vicar of Peter, as unifier, not as director of "branch officers" around the world.

This distinction is particularly important when reflecting upon the role of the various curial offices. The impression often exists that they make decisions not on the basis of what is essential and/or important for unity, but rather on the basis of their judgement on how things ought to be done. While that may be a commendable motive, it is not their role. The current discussion about Communion under both species on Sundays is a timely example. When an Italian curial official recently

was asked this by a group of American bishops, he replied that the reason for his concern was the fact that Communion under both species cannot be administered reverently to a large congregation. It was clear that he was attempting to make a personal decision based on his pastoral judgement about logistics, rather than on the way such a practice might affect the unity of the church. In doing so, he appeared to be preempting the pastoral and practical judgement of the local bishops. Anyone who has attempted to deal with traffic in Rome can appreciate his practical concern. That, however, is a fairly limited perspective of the possibilities of good order.

A word about church unity would be helpful to our understanding of the Petrine office The ultimate principle of unity in the church is the Holy Spirit This belief has sometimes been obscured by statements that could be open to misinterpretation. Pope Pius IX, for example, in rejecting the aims of the Association for the Promotion of the the Reunion of Christendom, referred to the Papacy as "the beginning, the root and the indefectible source" of unity.

When we affirm the Spirit as our source of unity, possibilities of external diversity widen. Nonetheless, within this diversity our unity must be perceptible It is more than an abstraction Thus, in the essentials of faith and sacraments, diversity of expression must not be so great as to make it impossible to perceive our unity in them.

Beyond the essentials of faith and sacraments, there is also the matter of common practices, which though not absolutely essential to unity, contribute to it in an important way This is an area of pastoral, prudential judgement, and it is ultimately the responsibility of the Holy Father to make such judgements It is a distinctive aspect of the Petrine role

There is a way in which diversity of practice, pushed to an extreme, can be harmful to unity On the other hand, there is a way in which uniformity of practice pushed to an extreme, can do the same thing. If the ultimate source of unity is the Holy Spirit, then it must be recognized that uniformity could interfere with the full expression of the Spirit in all people and all cultures and thus prevent us from truly uniting with them Instead of union, we would have absorption, and absorption is not the kind of communion sought by a church that is "catholic". The Chinese rites controversy in the 17th century is an example of how excessive uniformity can actually cause a lack of unity in the Spirit.

In this regard one might also keep in mind that at this very moment the unity of the church is able to sustain such diversity as the Byzantine, Armenian, Chaldean, Antiochene, Alexandrine and Latin rites, two

different Codes of Canon Law, celibate and married priests, leavened and unleavened Eucharistic bread — all within the full communion of the Catholic Church.

In his address to the U.S. bishops at Collegeville, Minn., in 1982, Cardinal John Dearden commented on unity and diversity in the church: "This understanding of the local church — and the role of the bishop who presides over it — in no way diminishes the indispensable reality of the universal church, willed as it is by Christ, nor the role of the Holy Father as Peter's successor. What it does is to restore in our thinking the inherent dignity and completeness, in faith and sacrament, of the particular church. The local church is not seen as a fragment or piece of a whole, but as a community of faith having its own integrity even as it relates to the universal church . Parenthetically, this concept of local church related to the 'catholica' (universal church) gives us an insight into something that appears new to many Catholics, namely, pluralism among the local churches within the framework of essential unity When each local church is properly seen as an integral realization of church, then pluralism within unity becomes a sign of strength, not a sign of weakness. Each local church with its uniqueness adds to the richness of the 'catholica'."

Power in Context

The First Vatican Council (1869-1870), apart from the better known decree on infallibility, described the distinctive role of the Pope primarily in terms of jurisdictional power. Because the council was cut short by a war, it never had the opportunity to develop the context of this power, as intended. The Pope, the council said, has ordinary and immediate jurisdiction over each and every diocese in the world. Such a statement could easily be misunderstood to mean that the Pope rules the church as though it were all one diocese, and that his power absorbs that of the local bishop.

Power in the church, however, must always be situated in its context. For example, Catholics often speak of the "power" of the ordained priest to consecrate bread and wine. To look at this power in itself, apart from its proper context, could lead to much misunderstanding about the role of a priest. For example, if a priest simply wished to accumulate Mass stipends and celebrated 10 Masses a day, he would not be exercising the role intended. Or to use an example from my seminary days, a priest is certainly not entitled by this power to walk into a bakery and declare over all the bread: "This is My Body."

The jurisdictional power of the Pope must also be seen in its context. As we have seen, the purpose of this power is the unity of the church, not the absorption of the pastoral and practical judgement of the local bishop.

This misunderstanding is not sheer fantasy, as illustrated by an event that occured 109 years ago. When he read about the papal powers described in the First Vatican Council, Prince Otto von Bismarck, Chancellor of the German Empire, drew some erroneous conclusions. He, like many Catholics today, did not understand the context of these powers, and thus he sent a directive to his diplomatic representatives pointing out that papal jurisdiction as described in Vatican I now absorbed that of the local bishops. Bishops were simply papal functionaries Governments should therefore bypass the local bishops and deal directly with the Pope.

When this statement became public, the German bishops issued a strong statement of their own. Their statement listed eight *errors* in Bismarck's approach:

1 As a result of these conciliar decrees the Pope can now take into his own hand the rights of the bishops in each and every diocese and can now substitute his own papal power for that of the residential bishops.

2. Episcopal jurisdiction has been absorbed by papal jurisdiction

3. The Pope no longer exercises, as he did in the past, merely a few determined rights reserved to himself, but now he is the depository of the totality of episcopal rights

4 He has, in principle, taken the place of each individual bishop

5 At any time the Pope, at his own good pleasure, can in practical affairs take the place of the bishop in his relations with the government

6. The bishops are now nothing more than his instruments and functionaries with no personal responsibility.

7 The bishops have become, in their relations with their governments, the functionaries of a foreign sovereign

8 The Pope, by virtue of his infallibility, is truly a perfectly absolute sovereign, more absolute than any absolute secular monarch.

The Bishops concluded this list by saying: "All of these statements are without foundation". The German bishops then expanded on the true teaching of the church: "According to this teaching of the Catholic Church, the Pope is Bishop of Rome, not bishop of any other city or diocese, not bishop of Cologne or of Breslau. . According to the constant teaching of the Catholic Church the bishops are not mere

instruments of the Pope, nor papal functionaries with no personal responsibility, but rather they have been appointed by the Holy Spirit to take the place of the apostles in order to nurture and rule, as befits good shepherds, the flock committed to them."

These are strong statements. How did Rome react? The response was not long in coming — less than a month. Pius IX said, in words that might surprise some: "Your statement is indeed so clear and sound that, since it leaves nothing to be desired, we ought to content ourselves by merely giving you our fullest congratulations."

Nearly 90 years later, "Lumen Gentium" included similar language: "Bishops govern the particular churches entrusted to them as the vicars and ambassadors of Christ The pastoral office or the habitual care of their sheep is entrusted to them completely. Nor are they to be regarded as vicars of the Roman Pontiff, for they exercise an authority which is proper to them, and are quite correctly called 'prelates', heads of the people whom they govern." The council, in its official footnote on this passage, cites the above statement by the German bishops and the response of Pope Pius IX.

The Need for Clarification Today

A number of pastoral reasons indicate an urgent need for a clarification of the relationship of the church of Rome to the other local churches around the world. Among these is the fact that the spirit of Bismarck lives on among some Catholics today When they have a concern they bypass the local bishop or even the conference of bishops and go directly to Rome This practice distorts the nature of the church. It fosters the very model that Bismarck promoted: a model emphatically declared false by the German bishops and by Pope Pius IX.

This practice also tends to communicate to Rome a distorted picture of many local churches The good news of what is taking place in so many dioceses is twisted into bad news. Horror stories are sent to Rome in deliberately organized campaigns, and they take root before the local bishop has even heard about them. This is not only contrary to proper ecclesiology; it is contrary to the Gospel.

Another and more critical reason for clarifying the relationship of the church of Rome to the other local churches around the world is to prepare the "people in the pew" for changes that have begun to take place. One of the most common complaints during the flurry of changes that took place after Vatican II was that the people were not

properly prepared for them. They were given the changes without any prior explanation of the reasons behind them.

Very significant changes are under way in church practice regarding the reality of local churches. Vatican II laid the foundations for these changes, and the new Code of Canon Law has begun to implement them. Local churches are emerging to take their more traditional place in the communion of churches that make up the universal church. There is increasing diversity within unity. Unless Catholics understand the reasons for this, they will become confused, angry, reactionary. The positive growth of local churches will be perceived as the loss of unity and/or the decay of the Papacy. Again, since in our own century the trajectory of the exercise of papal power reached its highest point, it will undoubtedly move in another direction, downward from the peak, reaching perhaps the level of papal style of the early centuries. The less centralized model of the earlier, small church is now made possible in a large church by modern travel and communication.

For those who understand traditional ecclesiology, a trend in this direction will be seen as a sign of health For others (the vast majority of Catholics), it will be confusing. It will be seen as a threat to the most cherished jewel of Catholicism: the Papacy at its peak of power There will be resistance, charges of heresy, loyalty tests. Worse than that, the fracas could easily lead to extreme positions: on the one side those who would want to reclaim the pre-Vatican II model of Papacy and on the other side those who in reaction to this would want to replace the Papacy with democracy The first would be a regression, the second runs contrary to the nature of the church.

We learned a lesson about change during the 1960's. Careful explanation is needed so that people understand the reasons for every change We should take heed from that experience and do this one right.

The SPCK in India, 1710-1985. By Victory Koilpillai *Delhi, ISPCK* 1985 Pp. 80 n p

This book gives the fascinating story of the involvement of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, founded in the early 18th century in England, with the work of the Danish Lutheran Mission in the earliest Protestant missionary enterprise in the country. Its presence in India for the last 275 years has blossomed in the foundation of the Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge founded in 1958. This booklet, commemorating these events, is of interest to Church historians in India and to those interested in Christian publishing and its problems. They will find here a record of how the SPCK and its daughter the ISPCK have tried to cope with them through the centuries

"Young People, be Yourselves"

R. J. RAJA, S.J.*

THE words of Pope John Paul II to the youth of Kenya: "Young people, be yourselves. Be young people, and reach out to each other in generosity and fraternal service. Be young people, and do not let your hearts know selfishness or greed. Be young people, and let your songs reveal your daring and your vision for the future",[1] seem to sum up — crisply what the Bible has to tell about the youth.

Right at the outset let it be known that the Bible does not deal with the theme *youth* or its problems and concerns ex professo. The information on and reflections about youth are piecemeal and at random so that one is at a loss to get a synthesis of biblical teaching on youth. In fact quite a few of the biblical dictionaries do not even treat the term youth as an item in their lists. Such being the case, it shall be only presumptuous on my part to attempt even to think of an article on youth in the Bible. What I am intending here is simply to give some pointers from the Bible for a reflection on the theme of youth.

Without necessarily referring to marriage or non-marriage (cf. Judg 19:3-4), the term youth denotes a stage beyond infancy and before prime[2], a period of vigour and opportunities, though not of judgement and maturity (1 Kgs 3:7; Jer 1:6, cf. Judg 6.15) Though on the one hand the Book of Proverbs speaks of the strength of young age (Prov 20:19), on the other, the repeated admonitions to the youth highlight the lack of experience, want of wisdom and the need for instruction that typify this period of life in man (Prov 7:4-12.24; 8:32-36). Though in Hosea the days of the early history of Israel (cf. "days of her youth"

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*Fr R. J RAJA is Professor of Sacred Scripture at the St Paul's Seminary, Tiruchirapalli His last contribution to VIDYAJYOTI was in October 1984.

1. NG'WENO H, CAGGIANO P., *John Paul II in Kenya*, Nairobi 1980, 16.

2 Since 20 and above is considered the period of maturity (cf. Ex 30:14), the age fit for being included in the census, one may posit 20 as the upper limit of youth (cf Lev 27·1-8) There are a number of terms used in the N.T. to denote *babies* and *children* such as *brephos*; Lk 2.12; 18:15 etc., *thelazon*: only once, in Mt 21·16; *thygater* (*thygatrion*): Mk 5.35, 7·25; *korasion*: Mk 6:22, Mt 14:11; *nepios*: Mt 21:16; Rom 2:20, *pais* (*paidarion, paidion, paidiske*); Mt 2·16; Jn 6:9; Mt 2·8; Mk 14·66, *teknion* Rev 12·4; *hyos*: Mt 11:27; 24:36, etc In a few cases some of them (*nepios, pais, thygater, huios* and *teknon*) are also used to refer to youth! But our concern in this article is not about babies and children.

Hos 2:15ff) are fondly remembered as days of assiduous loyalty to the covenantal Lord, yet Ezekiel regrets it as the period of harlotry (Ex 23:19). Thus the problem of youth is caught between the horns of a dilemma.

Vocabulary

Both the LXX and the N.T. use two terms, "*mikros*" (small) and its derivatives, and *neos* (new) and its associates, to translate various Hebrew words used to describe youth, the chief among them being *qatan* (translated "mikros" — 1 Sam 16:11; Is 11:6, etc.; "neos" — Gen 9:24; 42:13; etc); *sa'ir* (translated "neos" — Gen 19:31; Job 31:1; etc); and *na'ar* (translated "neos" — Job 24:5; 2 Chr 13:7; etc).

1) The original meaning of *mikros* as "small" has to be understood in the context of its antonym *megas*[3] which means "great" (cf. "a small boy" in 1 Sam 16:11; Is 11:6) But from smallness in size, with reference to things (cf Gen 1:16; Am 6:11 etc.), the meaning of *humility*, and *modesty* with reference to persons is not far to seek. The words of Solomon on his accession to the throne, "O Lord . I am but a little child (*mikron*), I do not know how to go out or come in" (1 Kgs 3:7, cf also Jer 1:6), are surely an expression of the act of self-effacement of Solomon before the omnipotent God (cf. Judg 6:15; Is 60:22; 1 Sam 9:21; 15:1, etc)

The association of the young ones with humility — an acknowledgement of one's own inability — is also expressed by Jesus (cf Mt 18 4, 23:12) To remain a child is to recognize oneself as insignificant Jesus attacks at the very root the craving of his disciples to be great (Lk 9:46ff). He overcomes the pharisaic and general striving for greatness and at the same time overthrows the temptation implicit in littleness. "He finds in littleness before God, in the birth of this littleness, in self-humiliation and self-abasement, the way to win the Kingdom of heaven and to be great in the new aeon"[4] (cf Col 3:12; Phil 2:3.8; 4·12, etc) He himself has become "gentle and lowly in heart" (Mt 11:29) which means he has assumed the qualities of the young in himself.

The demand to humble oneself as a child (Mt 18:1-5) does not mean that one should consider or make oneself lower than one actually is,

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3. The term *mikros* is used by the rabbis as a derogatory term, denoting "young disciples" as "immature pupils" cf STRACK, H L , BILLERBECK, P., *Kommentar zum NT*, Munich 1978, Vol 1, 591, 1. "a pupil who rebels against his teachers . . . a pupil who is not yet able to make decisions, but makes them (just the same)"

4. MICHAEL, O., *mikros*, *TDNT* IV, 648-659, esp 655.

but realize, like the child, how lowly one is, *how lowly one really is before God*. This is true greatness.[5]

Hence youthfulness stands for the *acknowledgement of the truth about oneself and about God*, with none of the derogatory undertones the concept has in the Rabbis. Being young means being able to accept oneself as in a state of growth; being young means the ability to acknowledge one's own defects and hence the readiness to be corrected; being young means being willing to learn; being young means living with hope; being young means a never-ending search; being young means having *a daring and a vision* for the future; being young, in fine, means to accept the fact that one is in a process and a movement. Young in chronological age need not necessarily mean young in heart! But the chronologically young should be willing and ready *to accept and initiate changes* — this is the sign of true youth.

2) The term *neos* and its companion words[6] have two root meanings. They may denote, first, something new, which was not previously there, belonging to the present moment, etc., and, secondly, youthful or young with reference to age, as opposed to an "elder" or an old man (*presbyteros* or *gerōn*).

While in Num 28: 16 the first fruits (that ripen in the month of Abib: see Ex 13:4; 23:15 etc,) are called *ta nea* (the new ones), in Gen 9:24; 42·13; Judg 8:20 etc. the terms *neoteros*, *neos*, etc, are used with reference to young in age. In the deuterocanonical books (cf Tob 1:4; Sir 9:10; Mac 6.17 etc.) reference is made to youth with allusion to inexperience and hence immaturity. In general one may say that *neos* and related terms may acquire the meaning of susceptibility to evil and educability to do good (Dt 1:39).

In the N. T. the term "*neos*", found less frequently than *kainos*,[7] is also used both to denote freshness, newness, etc. from a temporal

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5. Cf. "My humiliation is my exaltation. my exaltation is my humiliation". STR-BILL I·774, cf also Ps 56.1, 113·5ff

6. *neotes* — youth (Acts 26.4, 1 Tim 4:12 etc.); *neanias* — young man (Acts 7 58, 20.9, 23 17 etc), *neaniskos* — young man (Mt 19.20, Mk 14.51, Lk 7·14 etc.), *neos* — as a positive adjective, meaning young in age, new, fresh etc. (Mt 9.17, Mk 2.22 etc.); as a comparative adjective *neoteros*, meaning junior to (Lk 15 12, Jn 21·18 etc), as masculine noun *hoi neoi* (Acts 5.6, 1 Tim 5.1, Tit 2.6 etc), and as feminine noun *hai neai* (Tit 2·4; 1 Tim 5:2). See ZORELL, F., *Lexicon Graecum Novi Testamenti*, Rome 1978, 867-868; BEHM, J, *neos*, *TDNT* IV, 896-901, ARNDT, W. F., GINGRICH, F. W, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the NT*, Chicago 1979, 534.

7. *kainos* is used with an eschatological content, with specific reference to salvation (cf. *new covenant* Mt 26·28, 1 Cor 11:25, Heb 8.8 etc.; *new commandment*. Jn 13.34, 1 Jn 2:7 etc., *new creation*: 2 Cor 5:17, Gal 6.15 etc , *new man*: Eph 2.15, 4:24 etc.; *new heaven and new earth* 2 Pet 3:13, Rev 21:1 etc., *new name*: Rev 2.17; 3.12, *new song*. Rev 5.9, 14:3 etc.). See, BEHM, J., *Kainos*, *TDNT* III, 447-454.

aspect (cf. 1 Cor 5:7; Mt 9:17; Col 3:9f etc.) and to signify youthfulness in age (Tit 2:4; Lk 15:12; Acts 5:6; 26:4 etc.). It is this relationship and transition from the former to the latter which are highlighted in the terms "*ananeoomai*" (which occurs only in Eph 4:23) and "*anakainoomai*" (Col 3:10), both of which mean *to be renewed in the inner nature*.[8] The evident conclusion is that to be young or youthful means *to be new, to be renewed*, to have zest and enthusiasm, to be active and dynamic.

It is this dynamism and zest that is ingrained in the youth which sets him in opposition to the frozen sets of laws and regulations (Gal 6:15). He is a new being adopted as son (Gal 4:5) in the newness of the Spirit (Rom 8:6) and of Christ (2 Cor 5:17).

This new existence is both an *indicative* and an *imperative*, a demand and a challenge as is shown below:

Col 3:9	"seeing that *you have put off* the old nature with its practices and *have put on* the new nature. . ."	*Col* 3 2-13	"*Put on* .. Compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience, forbearing one another. . . forgiving each other. . ."
Eph 4. 20-21	"*You did not so learn* Christ .. You have *heard* about him and *were taught* in him. . ."	*Eph* 4 22-23	"*Put off* your old nature . . . be *renewed* in the spirit of your minds, and *put on* the new nature created in the likeness of God. ."
Rom 6 6	"We know that our old self was *crucified* with him. "	*Rom* 6 6	"that . . *we might no longer be enslaved* to sin"

The imperative only validates the indicative. There is a dialectic here in which law and Gospel, gift and task are juxtaposed. It is a tension between *what we are* and *what we are not*. This unavoidable and necessary tension is what keeps the new man, in our case, the young, always in a situation of *healthy restlessness*.

The youth have to feel disquieted at themselves, their talents and achievements; they must feel impatient at the society and its unjust structures that suppress and oppress human beings; they should experience restlessness in restoring dignity to man and society; they must, in fact, recognize the limitless potential they have in themselves for good or for bad, and act rightly.

It is this deep-rooted dynamism and force, initiative and creativity that should come to the uppermost when they voice their protest against traditional laws, fossilized and antiquated customs (such as caste or the

8 Eph 4. 23-24 · "*Be renewed* in the spirit of your minds and *put on the new nature*, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness"; Col 3: 10. "Have *put on the new* nature, which is *being renewed* in knowledge after the image of its creator."

dowry system); when they take up the cudgels to fight against an unjust and oppressive social order; when as *"prophets of protest"*, they raise their voice against power-mongers forcing the world into a nuclear doom and holocaust; in fine, when they stand up for all that is true, good and beautiful in this world. In fact, this is what the Pope means when he says: "do not let your hearts know selfishness or greed... let your songs reveal your daring and your vision."

But together with youth and daring goes a training or education (hard indeed), that is part and parcel of this stage in man. It is in this sense that the term *elencho* meaning discipline, conviction, reproof, correction, rebuke, punishment etc. (cf. Is 37:3; 50:2; Num 5:18f etc.) is repeatedly used as a parallel term to *paideuo* which means training or education: cf. Prov 3:11-12; 6:23; 9:7-8; 15:12; 29:15; Sir 18:13).[9] There is no education that is not accompanied by correction or discipline. When God (Job 5:17) or a good man (Ps 141:5) instils such discipline, happy is that youth ! It is then of paramount importance that the youth of today submit themselves to discipline and character training as *sine qua non* of this stage of their life. To be ready *to be chastened and corrected* must surely then be a characteristic mark of a young man.

Discipline, especially as it comes from God, is a sign of his love rather than of his displeasure or anger (Prov 3:11-12 as cited and explained in Heb 12:5-11). In human upbringing too this method of God's education is verified. In both cases it is in discipline that the fatherly activity (of God as well as a human father or educator) is experienced (Heb 12:6). Hence, it is in *being under discipline* or *in being disciplined* that the young man accepts his status as a son. But the discipline itself, though painful, is meant to express a love and concern for the disciplined and lead him to "the perfect fruit of righteousness" (Heb 12:11).[10] All other disciplines are meant only to help this growth; and any other thing which, in the name of discipline, stifles the free blossoming of the individual and his identity and talents is not worthy of the name discipline.

To be young then is to recognize oneself to be what one really is, that one depends on God and elders, which at the same time means one

9 The term *paideuo* as derived from *pais* (child or boy) means literally "to be together with a child" and hence, to educate, to bring up, to instruct, etc. Notice the words *paideia* which means education, *paidagogos*, custodian, tutor, etc , and *paideutes*, a teacher or educator. Cf. BERTRAM, G., *paideuo*, *TDNT* V, 596-625; Oepke, A., *pais*, *TDNT* V, 636-654, BÜCHSEL, F., *elencho*, *TDNT* II, 473-474.

10. Cf "It bears fruit in peace and goodness" Heb 12·11 (JB). See also, "Those who are engaged in education, especially the education of the young ... should regard it as among their greatest responsibilities, to educate people who want peace. Everyone of us needs a change of heart, we must keep in mind the needs of the whole world and see what tasks we can all perform together in order to bring about the improvement of mankind" (*GS*, 82).

is willing to learn from the experience of others. To be young means that one has chances to grow, which implies that one is able to accept challenges and take risks, and at the same time submits oneself to correction. To be young means a readiness to be renewed, and thus give a new image to the society in which one lives. It is here that sincerity comes into play. Will one involve oneself in the renewal and establishment of a God-fearing and just society? *Self-acceptance*, of what one really is, and *self-renewal*, in one's inner nature and personhood, are bound to take a person beyond the narrow confines of his or her selfish existence, into the world of men and women, and to bring about a change of heart.

It is to these young people that God prophetically promises the messianic blessings even today, through the mouth of Joel:

> "I will pour out my Spirit on everyone,
> Your sons and daughters will proclaim my message;
> Your young men shall see visions" (Joel 2.28f; Acts 2:17).

The future depends on the youth. What they are today shall be a clear indication of what our future shall be. If they live as they ought, as if the messianic days are on, they shall become prophets, men filled with the Spirit, not merely proclaiming "God's message" of fraternity, equality, justice, but also actuating in themselves and working in others "the just order and the ideal of the universal man."[11]

This shall become an actuality only when the youth have learned to see visions and dream dreams. Going far out of their narrow frontiers, the youth must look at and face the future not with apathy, indifference and resignation, but with a certain forthrightness, honesty and tenacity of purpose. "If we live by the Spirit, let us walk by the Spirit" (Gal 5.25 RSV). As the GNB puts it so well: "The Spirit has given us life, he must also control our lives." This indeed is being young.

A sample youth

There are in the Bible a number of persons portrayed as young (e.g. Samuel: 1 Sam 2.11.18.21 etc., David: 1 Sam 16:11; 17:14.33.42 etc.; Absalom: 2 Sam 14:21; 18:5; Jeremiah: Jer 1:6 etc.)[12]. We shall take just one example, that of Samuel, and see how he embodies in himself the ideals of youth all of us dream of.

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11. Vat. II: *GS*, 61.

12. The term *na'ar* is used in all these cases except in I Sam 17.14 where we find the term '*qatan*'. The LXX translates it as *paidarion*, youth.

The young man Samuel is introduced as one who "ministered to the Lord" in the Temple (1 Sam 2:11.18) in the presence of (and under the guidance of) Eli the priest. It is this which makes him grow "*in favour with the Lord and with men*" as he also waxed in age and stature (1 Sam 2:26). This indeed is true growing to ideal manhood. Later on, in the N.T., referring to Jesus' youthful growth Lk does not hesitate to use the same expression: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature (years) and *in favour with God and man*" (Lk 2:52; cf. also 2:40).[13]

In both cases where the LXX and Lk use the term *charis* (translated "favour" RSV; GNB), it means lovableness in the sight of God and men, denoting not merely "spiritual" holiness but graciousness, gentleness, charm and attractiveness. Samuel and Jesus, both developed an all-round growth — physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual — pleasing to both God and men.

The *harmonious and balanced growth* that is presented here in the case of Samuel and of Jesus is the ideal that our youth should aim at and emulate. The cultivation of one (physical growth) to the detriment of the other (intellectual, emotional and spiritual), or vice versa is to make a monster out of the young man or girl. The term "*prokopto*" which in the original sense means "to make one's way forward by chopping away obstacles" (cf. Rom 13:12; Gal 1.14; 2 Tim 2.16 etc.)[14] expresses the idea of "*pioneers cutting in front*" or "lengthening (something) by hammering".[15] This means that growth involves *pain and suffering* in conquering obstacles and difficulties that present themselves from one's own self, from others and from circumstances. For, excellence in youth is attained only through hard work Does not the old adage remind us that genius is one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration ? Of this the youth of our times must be convinced. It is only in this way they too "will find favour and good repute in the sight of God and man" (Prov 3·4)

Young Samuel is further presented as one ever alert in and sensitive to the service of the Lord and his people. The four times repeated phrase "*Here I am*" (1 Sam 3:4 6 8.16) and the obedient words, "Speak, for your servant hears" (I Sam 3:10) surely remind us of the words of the Psalmist (Ps 40:6-8) placed in the lips of Jesus, "Lo, I have come to do your will, O God" (Heb 10:5-7).

13. In Lk the terms used in this pericope (2:39-52) to refer to Jesus are *paidion* (2.40), *pais* (2:43), *teknos* (2.48), and he is identified as being "twelve years old" (2.42). Both RSV and GNB translate these terms as "child", "boy" and "son" respectively. We may say he was a young man (*neos*) !

14 STAHLIN, G., *prokopto*, *TDNT* VI, 703-719; see especially 713f.

15. PLUMMER, A., *The Gospel according to St Luke*. ICC, Edinburgh 1977, 79.

Obedience to God which is expressed through dedication and commitment to the task ahead is what both the young Samuel and Jesus demand from the youth.[16] As the young Samuel is obedient to both God (1 Sam 3:10) and man, namely Eli (1 Sam 3:4ff), so also is Jesus obedient to God (Heb 10:5-7) and to men, namely Mary and Joseph (cf. Lk 2:51). Obedience then to the will and expressions of God (which may come to us from the Scriptures, from a right conscience or from the signs of the times) and to the elders (be they parents, teachers or priests) in so far as they represent the will and good pleasure of God, is part and parcel of this growing period in youth.

The fact that the young Samuel was obedient to the Lord and to Eli is testified to by the result, when the author of 1 Sam says: "And Samuel grew, and *the Lord was with him* and let none of his words fall to the ground and he was established as a *prophet of the Lord*" (1 Sam 3:19-20). The "emerging" youth of our times should surely "demerge" themselves and in this way grow into prophets themselves. To be young is to be prophetic But the prophet is born only when the youth are ready to strip themselves naked of all selfishness and greed, securities and protections, plans and ways of doing things on their own, etc The power "to tear up and to knock down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant" (Jer 1·10) shall be theirs only when they have learned to surrender themselves When the young man has "passed over" himself, it is then that God shall "pass over" to him with light and strength[17] That it was so in the life of Jesus too is plain to see (cf. Phil 2:5-11; Mk 8.31; 9:31, 10:33, etc.).

Once again the young Samuel stands out as an example for youth in so far as he *changes the present order and makes things happen* From the fact that "the ark of God was captured" by the Philistines (cf 1 Sam 4:11.17) and hence "the glory has departed" (1 Sam 4:20) from Israel, it is the young Samuel who conquers the Philistines and brings about the turn of events From "*Ichabod*" ("the glory is not" — cf. 1 Sam 4·21), we have now the "*Ebenezer*" ("hitherto the Lord has helped us" — cf 1 Sam 6 12), thanks to Samuel who put all his reliance on God (cf 1 Sam 7 3-4)

A "turning away" from the idols and a "turning to" the Lord from the part of the people is all that Samuel asks of them. The Lord hears

16 In the case of Ps 40 6-8, as is lived in the life of Jesus, sacrifice and cult are not "per se" repudiated (cf also 1 Sam 15 22; Ps 50·8-14; Jer 7·21ff; Is 1 11ff etc) On the contrary what is affirmed is that obedience is more important than sacrifices Cult is only a vehicle, and cultic institutions such as sacrifices, prayers, rituals, etc , are ineffective when used by those who flagrantly disobey the covenant of God

17 Cf R C RAJA, "Prophets for the Third World", in *VIDYAJYOTI*, October 1984, 433-434

the persevering prayer of Samuel for his people and restores peace and prosperity (1 Sam 7:5-13). Jesus too "offered up prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears . and he was heard for his godly fear" (Heb 5:7).[18] *Prayer* then should play a great role in the life of the youth. The "power beyond" must come to the aid of the "power within" us. When this takes place there dawns on the young man a daring and a courage ("parresia") that make him come out openly and stand up and speak out for truth (cf. Acts 4:29; 9:27f; 18:25f; Jn 18:20f; 7:25f etc.); it means he is open to God in faith and to his neighbour in love (1 Jn 3:21ff); it means he is open *towards man* (2 Cor 7:4; Eph 6:20; 1 Thess 2:2 etc.) and at the same time open *towards God* (Eph 3:12; 2 Cor 3:12).[19]

Young Samuel thus becomes a model (one among the many which the Bible portrays), of youthful excellence. As we are in the International Year of Youth the wish and prayer of those who are entrusted with the moulding of the youth and of the youth themselves should be that there be more "Samuels" among our youth-people who yearn for and enjoy wisdom and favour with God and with men; people who do not count the cost in their struggle for peace and justice; people ready and willing to listen and obey; people who are able to "pass over" themselves; people who put their sole trust in God; people, in one word, full of the biblical *parresia*, the daring in thinking, planning and acting.

18 The term "godly fear" is the translation of *eulabeia* which in secular sphere means caution, concern, circumspection, vigilance etc, but it takes on also a spiritual connotation in the sense of religious awe. In Christian usage it acquires the meaning pious, devout, just, etc. (cf. Acts 2 5.25, 8.2, 22:12, etc.). In Heb 5·7 it could mean piety, devotion or even obedience in faith. Cf. MICHEL, O., *Der Brief an die Hebräer*, Göttingen 1975, 222f; KUSS, O., *Der Brief an die Hebräer*, Regensburg 1966, 74. But *contra* is BULTMANN, R., *eulabes* etc., *TDNT* II, 751-754.

19 SCHLIER, H., *parrêsia*, *TDNT* V, 871-886.

The Joy of God

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

IT is often repeated that the Christian message is basically a message of joy and hope: Christmas and Easter remind us of this twice every year. Quite a number of articles and books have been published on this theme. Joy seems to be a naturally attractive subject for spiritual and apologetic writers. However few studies treat the topic in depth. The reason for this may be a certain hesitance on the part of theologians to speak about joy Too much talk about it can easily lead to a presentation of a shallow and mawkish Christianity. Retreat directors know that while it is relatively easy to lead the retreatant to feel a deep inner sympathy with the sorrows of Jesus, it is much more difficult to have an authentic spiritual experience of the joy of the risen Lord, and that this requires a spiritual sensitivity which is highly purified.

Ancient Indian thought seems to have made a distinction between *harṣa* (mirth) and *ānanda* (bliss, joy) The former is one member in a pair of opposites, the *dvandvas*, and the wise and spiritual person is called upon to go beyond both *dhiro harṣaśokau jahāti*, "the strong spirit abandons mirth and sadness", says the Katha Upaniṣad (2.12), for these emotions are characteristic of the *rājasic* or passionate life (cf *Gītā* 18:27) An authentic spiritual life does not concern itself with these and is neither built on nor destroyed by them. On the other hand *ānanda*, bliss or joy, does not belong to the *dvandvas* how could it when it is the characteristic of Brahman Itself, *vijñānam ānandam brahma*, according to the Bṛhad Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 3 9.28 ?

The book of MORRICE[1] offers us the partial results of a doctoral work devoted to the study of the theme of joy in the NT. It is essentially a terminological study The author chooses not one word but a cluster of Greek words that refer to the experience of joy, and in the first part of the book gives the number and places of their occurrence in the New Testament The second part consists of nine short chapters in which, first, Jesus is presented as a man of joy according to the NT record, and then the treatment of the theme of joy by the different authors of the Christian biblical record is offered. Here the most

1. **Joy in the New Testament.** By G MORRICE *Exeter, The Paternoster Press*, 1984 Pp. 173 L 4.95.

important chapters explain "the Gospel of Joy and its Sequel" (Lk and Acts), the Fullness of Joy (Jn), Joy in the Lord (Paul) and Joy in Suffering (1 Pet).

The eleven words studied throughout the book are the following or their corresponding verbs and other cognates: *agalliasis* (exultant joy), *euthymos* (optimism), *euphrosynē* (gladness), *hēdonē* (pleasure), *tharsos* (*courage*), *hilarotēs* (hilarity), *kauchesis* (boasting), *makarismos* (blessedness), *skirtan* (leaping for joy), *chara* (inward joy), *synchairein* (shared joy). Inevitably, the list is somewhat arbitrary: one wonders how *kauchēsis*, *tharsos* or *skirtan* fall directly under the concept of joy, and, if one does include these, why words like *eirēnē* (shalom, peace), *parrēsia* (confidence), *elpis* (hope) and others should not be studied. The exegesis of each word is somewhat hurried and the secondary sources used are often, though not exclusively, half or a century old.[2]

Reading this book attentively one is struck by how pervasive the theme of joy is in the NT. As in the OT, the experience of joy arises largely from the historical events to which the biblical authors give witness In the NT the theme is specially connected with the witness to the Resurrection of Jesus To be joyful is an act of faith in the Resurrection However, paradoxically this joy manifests itself very often in the context of suffering and persecution Indeed the disciple who follows Jesus closely will find that his or her whole life, like that of Jesus, is a struggle. Yet of him or her it will also be said what was said of Jesus, that "for the joy that was set before him (he) endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb 12:2).

This joy of Jesus and the joy experienced in Jesus is not restricted to the resurrection experience. It pervades the whole life of Jesus and the message of the Gospel. As another author has said,

> Jesus often speaks of the kingdom as a joy that is shared and flows out upon humankind, as an abundance that is distributed with unlimited generosity and that seeks a permanent presence in relations among human beings. The characteristic greeting that accompanied the offer of the kingdom is. "Peace be to this house !" (Lk 10·5). "Peace," here, means above all an objective plenitude of blessing, as well as relationships among human beings that obey the principles of justice and solidarity Table fellowship, peace, and limitless giving are thus the motivating symbols of the kingdom and

2 The book gives the impression of being prepared in a hurry. The cross reference in the notes do not correspond to the pages of the book. In the synoptic table on p 80 the number 5 in the column under 2 Pet should be placed in the next column, under Jas.

thus the foundation of a practice dedicated to the full establishment of the Kingdom.[3]

Yet, in spite of this abundance of blessings and therefore of bliss, the Kingdom always implies toil and suffering. Because of this Dodd comes to the conclusion that "on the historical plane there is no 'eschatology of bliss' in the sayings of Jesus."[4]

In contrast with the Biblical record, the Upanisadic reflection on bliss tends to be metaphysical in character.[5] The trend of the Upanisadic teaching is that the joy experienced is related to the recovery of the unity of the human being, the concentration of the spirit, the victory over the duality and dispersion that had led us to lose our real personal identity in the scattered experiences of everyday life. If we overcome the distractedness of our existence, the outward pull of the senses, and withdraw into the core of our true being, then we are able to experience *ānanda* or bliss which in reality is there, at the metaphysical core of our existence, and waits to be discovered. Profound sleep is seen as the symbol and anticipation of authentic bliss because all dispersion ceases in that state and the self is concentrated. Similarly in the Upaniṣadic speculations on sex, the principal source of bliss noted in the sexual act is not the pleasure it gives (*rati*), nor even the fact that it leads to procreation (*prajāti*), and children indeed a boon and a source of joy[6], but the fact that in its deepest truth the sexual act rebuilds the unity of the human being. In the act of sexual union the primaeval bisection of the human being into male and female is overcome and "they become one" — even if only momentarily — and therefore the bliss of existence is experienced.

However the Upanisads and the later Indian philosophy go deeper They teach that perfect concentration leads to the experience of ānanda, because being *is* bliss. Bliss is a transcendental of reality. Hence the experience of joy is not something produced — for everything produced is ephemeral and of little value. Bliss belongs to being *saccidānanda*· Being is consciousness and bliss. Using the word *sukha* (pleasure) instead of *ānanda*, the Chândogya Upaniṣad affirms the equivalence between the *pleroma* and joy. *yo vai bhūmā tat sukham*, "what is plenitude is pleasure and there is no pleasure in what is small. Fullness alone is pleasure" (7.23.1).

3 Hugo ECHEGARAY, *The Practice of Jesus*, Maryknoll, N.Y., Orbis 1984, p 87

4 C H DODD, *The Parables of the Kingdom*, p. 54, as quoted by Echegaray, *op cit*, p 113

5 Cf on this my book, *Bliss in the Upanishads*, New Delhi, Oriental Publishers and Distributors, 1977

6 *pratirūpah putro jayate sa ānandah*, says the Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣhad, 4 1 6. the son that is born is bliss indeed, because he is an extension, an image of the father

The Absolute Being, therefore, cannot but be *ānanda*, bliss itself, as the Bṛhad Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad text quoted above says, and creation can be simply described as the participation on that bliss: "all other beings (*bhūtāni*) live upon (*upajīvanti*) one mere particle (*mātrā*) of that bliss" (Bṛ. Ār. Up. 4.3.32).

We may ask ourselves whether the Bible has dared to call God himself bliss or joy. At first sight it would seem that this is not the case. God is faithful, compassionate, just. God is even love. Is He/She Joy ? Is it perhaps *too* anthropomorphic, too irreverent, or at least too superficial to speak of the joy or mirth of God, *pace* Chesterton ? Although the nature of the Biblical writings is not so metaphysical as some of the Upanisads are, I think that with the guidance of the latter we can discover in the Bible itself a deep sense of the joy of God. Throughout his book Morrice gives us some help in this direction.

It has at times been said that Jesus is depicted in the NT as a man of sorrows, not as a man of joy, that he cries, but does not laugh. And it is true that of the 112 times the words for joy analysed by Morrice occur in the Gospels, only three of them refer to Jesus. But these are three precious references that perhaps enable us to have a glimpse into the inner soul of Jesus and his deep joy, which may explain why he exerted such an attraction for children and tormented sinners.

After the disciples come back joyful from their mission experience, Jesus "rejoiced (or 'exulted') in the Holy Spirit" (Lk 10:21):

> The reason for Christ's exultation of spirit was quite different from the motive behind the joy of the returned missionaries It was not the success of the mission as such that moved him to exult. Rather was it the additional evidence provided of the method of revelation chosen by God that thrilled his heart... The knowledge of God was no longer the preserve of a select few — such as the rabbis, who were specially trained to understand it It was open to simple-hearted people, such as those to whom the seventy-two had been sent. In other words, Jesus rejoiced that religion as a first-hand experience of the divine by mankind required no elaborate instruction, but simple trust and confidence in God as heavenly Father.[7]

On the eve of the Passion, according to John, Jesus speaks twice of the joy that belongs to him. "These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full" (Jn 15:11). The joy of Jesus was the joy of an unbroken relationship with the Father. So strong was this sense of the joy deriving from Jesus that years later the very purpose of the apostolic witness is defined by the same author as sharing and completing his joy (1 Jn 1:4. Cp. 2 Jn 12). And in the Priestly Prayer that concludes the Johannine discourse of

7. MORRICE, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

the Last Supper, Jesus speaks of the joy he shares with the disciples as being derived from his complete and final union with the Father (Jn 17:13).

Perhaps the most interesting reference to the Joy of Jesus is found outside the Gospels, in the letter to the Hebrews, where Jesus' joy is clearly associated with his Resurrection. Chapter 11 of the letter describes faith as a commitment to God's Word of promise that is able to sacrifice the immediate, visible reality for something better; "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (11:1). The models for this kind of commitment are the great witnesses of the Old Testament who surrendered their immediate securities for the sake of a greater promise of freedom and new life: notable among them are Abraham, Moses, the martyrs. After recalling these examples the authors turns his eyes to Jesus, the "pioneer and perfecter of our faith." His life is thus summarised: "for the joy that was set before him (he) endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God" (12.2). The joy of the resurrection, which means the joy of the new world, of God's Kingdom manifested to us, seems here to be the main spring of the whole life of Jesus.

If Jesus was a man of joy it is because he was led by the Holy Spirit. One is amazed by how often the Holy Spirit is associated with joy in the New Testament. It is not without reason that the Indian Christian liturgy and theology has called the Third Person *ānanda* At the moment when the mission of Paul and Barnabas opens up to the gentile world, Luke writes that "the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 13:52), and one is surely entitled to identify both terms. Already Elizabeth had been filled with the Holy Spirit when the child in her womb leapt for joy (Lk 1:41 44) and at the moment of his "exultation" mentioned above, Jesus had been filled with the Holy Spirit (Lk 10:21) Paul is no less explicit. joy comes from the Holy Spirit and is its fruit (cf. Gal 5:22). Thus the Thessalonians "received the word of God in much affliction", but "with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit" (1 Thess 1 6) And since the Kingdom of God is "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Ro 14:17), it is right to pray that "the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope" (Ro 15·13). Although the word Spirit is not explicitly mentioned, Paul's later prayer for the Colossians that they might be strengthened for all endurance, and patience with joy (Col 1:9-14), is surely a prayer for the Spirit.

John speaks often of "the fullness or completeness of joy" (cf Jn. 15:11; 16:24; 17:13; 1 Jn 1:4; 2 Jn 13). In the discourse at the last supper the promise of the fullness of joy cannot be dissociated from

the promise of the Helper, the Spirit. We may add that even the beatitude of 1 Pet 4:13-14 tells us that the joy and blessedness which the believer experiences in persecution comes as "the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you."

The Spirit is the revelation of the hidden depths of God's mystery (1 Cor 2:10), the innermost heart of God. Does the Bible apply the name Joy to the Source, to the Father Himself, as the Indian tradition has done ?[8] We find at least some hints of this. Psalm 43:4 prays confidently to "God, my exceeding joy". However we are more interested to see whether the NT permits us to meditate in this direction. In his parables Jesus refers to the joy of the Shepherd who finds the sheep, a figure who surely represents the heavenly Father: Mt 18:13 and specially Lk 15:7. The affirmation of the heavenly joy occurs twice in this famous 15th chapter of Lk (15:7 10), the heart of the third Gospel[9]. The climax is the picture of the Father of the prodigal son who is not only filled with pity when he sees him (15:20), but also with great joy (15:32), because his son was dead but now is alive, lost but now has been found.

Such biblical support enables us to continue the long Indian meditation on bliss as the very nature of the ultimate Reality. Joy is more than a state of exultation. It is more than a virtue which we acquire and in which grow as we advance in the spiritual life. It is in fact not something to be acquired or produced. To experience joy is to discover or to uncover the very heart of reality, the nature of God himself through his Spirit who dwells in our heart. Leon Bloy used to say that joy is the surest sign of the presence of God. This is true if indeed Brahman *is* ānanda The "joys" of life, the moments of laughter and banqueting and dancing, no less than the quiet experience of deep inner peace, are not unrelated to this ultimate and only true Reality that is God For as Paul defines Him in the book of Acts, God is one who "satisfies your hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14:17). To experience joy is to have a glimpse of that deepest secret of reality, that "mirth of God" of which G. K. Chesterton did not dare to speak.[10]

But the specific aspect of the NT teaching of joy is not merely the relation of the joy of God to the joy of Jesus shared with us in the Spirit. What is new is that this joy is found in forgiveness, and in the cross, in persecutions, and in the struggle for the new Kingdom. This is the most astonishing aspect of the Christian experience. When the Apostles first faced prison, and threats and persecution because they

8. Cf my article, "*Ānanda, Hēdonē* and the Holy Spirit" in *Indica*, 16 (1979), pp 83-101.
9. G. L. Ramaroson, "Le coeur du Troisième Evangile: Lc 15". in *Biblica* 60 (1979), 348-360.
10. See the closing page of *Orthodoxy*.

openly professed their faith in Jesus Christ, they experienced deep joy "because God had considered them worthy to suffer disgrace for the sake of Jesus" (Acts 5:41). The beatitudes of Mt and Lk climax in the discovery of the great joy that rises from the apostolic commitment to the Kingdom, in spite of hatred, insult, rejection and persecution. Paul finds happiness in suffering for the believers (Col 1:24). One may also find the same theme repeated in Heb 10:34, 12:2; 1 Pet 4:13 and even in James 1:12. The mysticism of the joy of the cross has a long tradition in the Church, from Ignatius of Antioch and other early martyrs, to Francis of Assisi, Catherine of Siena and the Spanish mystics, specially Ignatius of Loyola and Francis Xavier. The same testimony is forcefully given even today by those Christians who in Latin America struggle for a better world and suffer persecution and martyrdom for the Kingdom. Gustavo Gutiérrez has narrated us beautiful examples of this joy in martyrdom experienced today. We close this note with a quotation from his book on liberation spirituality in a chapter entitled "Joy: Victory over Suffering":

> The daily suffering of the poor and the surrender of their lives in the struggle against the causes of their situation have given new power to the Easter message. The deaths of so many in Latin America, whether anonymous individuals or persons better known, have made possible a deeper understanding of the Lord's resurrection Joy springs therefore from the hope that death is not the final word of history. As Hugo Echegaray writes: "In the restrictive situations in which the poor find themselves forced to live, they repeatedly encounter the cross of Jesus, which resulted from his option for fellowship. They thereby enter into the experience of the resurrection, which is life in the midst of the death that the system scatters as it goes."[11]

11. G GUTIÉRREZ, *We Drink from Our Own Wells*, London, SCM Press 1983, pp. 117-118. The quotation of ECHEGARAY is from *Anunciar el Reino*, Lima, CEP, 1981, p 97.

Document

A Report of the Vatican Delegation on the United Nations International Conference on Population, Mexico City, 6-14 August, 1984

1. Many themes of important pastoral significance were treated at the United Nations International Conference on Population, which was held in Mexico City from 6 to 14 August last, ten years after the similar Conference held in Bucharest in 1974.

The two principal documents produced by the Conference will exercise great impact on national and international policies concerning population and family issues in the coming years. They are:

— *Recommendations for the Further Implementation of the World Population Plan of Action*, and

— *The Declaration of Mexico City on Population and Development*

Both these documents are linked to and give full endorsement to the World Population Plan of Action (WPPA) which was the principal document of the 1974 Bucharest Population Conference. As is known, the Holy see did not join the consensus of the Bucharest conference because the WPPA contains certain affirmations which cannot be reconciled with the teaching of the Church, especially concerning the family, respect for life and an indiscriminate recourse to the means of birth regulation.

Prior to the WPPA, the international documents on population regarded the decisions concerning the spacing and limiting of births as the prerogative of married couples in their exercise of responsible parenthood. The WPPA speaks of "individuals and couples", thereby endorsing a viewpoint which accepts sexual intimacy and parenthood as appropriate for unmarried individuals.

The Mexico City Conference not only fully endorsed this viewpoint, but took it a step further by applying it specially to unmarried adolescents Thus the Delegation of the Holy See at the Mexico City Conference in a Statement which was entered into the Report of the Conference did not associate itself with the consensus regarding the final documents.

2 Whereas the solutions presented by most governments at the Mexico City Conference were still, as at Bucharest, centred on the provision of wider family planning information and services, the reasons presented reflect a change in position which is not without pastoral consequences.

At Bucharest, the need for the intensification of family planning services was affirmed principally to combat the "population explosion" which was presented in dramatic terms. At Mexico City this motiva-

tion was not absent. But the figures quoted were generally more balanced and attention was also drawn to the phenomenon of population decline in some developed nations. However, a new line of argumentation began to assume a central position: a *human right* to family planning was affirmed for all *individuals and couples* independent of any particular demographic situation.

This change in emphasis is, in fact, the logical development of the philosophy of the Bucharest Conference and of the WPPA when it affirmed a right to sexual intimacy and procreation not just for married couples, but also for unmarried individuals. At Mexico City it became very clear that, for many delegations, the fundamental unit of society is no longer the family, but more and more the individual.

The consequences of such a *pervasive individualism* for the understanding of sexuality are far-reaching. The concept of "communion", central to the Christian understanding of marriage, is no longer appreciated; the status of marriage is undervalued (in fact the references to the institution of marriage in the *Recommendations* are minimal); sexual relationships of varying duration can be justified on the basis of the personal satisfaction or fulfilment they bring to the individuals concerned; the fundamental link between sexual intimacy and procreation is not realized and the social function of sexuality is overlooked; one inevitably applies the right to family planning also to unmarried adolescents, as in fact was done at the Mexico City Conference.

The affirmation of a "human right to family planing", as presented by various family planning organizations, implies the recognition of a right of the individual to the use of sexuality for personal satisfaction outside marriage. It thus contains within itself a built-in element which is essentially destructive of the family.

This tendency of the Mexico City Conference reflects a vision of the person and of human sexuality which is being actively propagated by powerful and well financed family planning organisations Such organizations were extremely active during the Conference and one could note how they penetrated into the official governmental delegations even of the traditionally Catholic countries, but especially into the delegations of some of the developing nations.

This confirms the need for the Church in various nations to monitor the activities, the philosophy and the international links of local family planning associations.

Above all it confirms the need to stimulate within the Church a renewed catechesis on the principal elements which go to form the Christian understanding of sexuality, marriage and family life.

In this context, the Holy Father has given a concrete example with the series of weekly General Audience addresses which concluded in December 1984.

It would seem urgent to ensure that these texts of the Holy Father are published integrally in various nations and various languages as soon as possible. They should be made available to married couples, but

especially to theologians and those responsible for the formation of priests and of agents in the pastoral care of the family.

The Bishops should encourage the dissemination of those commentaries which faithfully present the Pope's teaching and which are aimed at the training of seminarians, the on-going formation of priests, as well as at the reflection of families themselces and family movements.

3. The Holy Father constantly recalls the attention of the entire world to the need to protect human life in all stages of its development, right from the moment of conception. And he emphasizes the Church's objection to *abortion*.

It is worth recalling that even the Secretary General of the Mexico City Conference, in his Report on the world population situation, had to admit to an increase in the number of abortions in countries "*despite substantial growth in contraceptive practice*". Yet family planning groups — and indeed many within the Church — still propose increase in programmes of contraception as a "first line defence against abortion."

The Delegation of the Holy See at the Mexico City Conference expressed clearly the Church's total objection, on moral grounds, to abortion. It also presented an amendment to the *Recommendations* which was accepted by the Conference and which affirmed that abortion "in no case should be promoted as a method of family planning." The term "family planning" was used at the Conference in an ambiguous manner Many influential speakers considered abortion as simply one of the "specific techniques" of family planning, to which they affirmed all women had a right.

The amendment of the Holy See was able to bring to light the wide consensus that exists among most nations against the promotion of abortion as a means of family planning. The impact of the amendments will have to be taken into account by national and international (governmental and non-governmental) organizations involved with family planning policy and services. It can be invoked by Episcopal Conferences, Church agencies and pro-life groupings in legal and political debates at local level It would seem important that Episcopal Conferences carefully monitor local programmes and protest at any legislative proposals or activities which would violate the policy approved by the amendment.

At the same time it is necessary to recall the limits of the amendments. The Delegation, in presenting the amendment to the Conference, made it clear that the approved text in no way reflects the totality of the Church's opposition to abortion. The experience of those nations whose local legislation contains similar affirmations rejecting abortion as a method of family planning shows that abortion can be legally introduced and promoted in many other ways. It should also be remembered that those very organizations which propose contraception as a "first line defence against abortion" go on to propose abortion "as a second line defence against 'unwanted pregnancies'."

4. While pointing to the reasons which underlie the Church's position on *sterilization*, the Holy See Delegation at the Mexico City Conference also recalled that sterilization is especially open to abuse of the rights of the person, particularly among the poor and the uninformed. Sterilization is probably the fastest growing method of family planning in Europe and in many other nations. Almost all of the delegations at the Population Conference considered voluntary sterilization as a normal means of family planning.

In recent months, a number of Episcopal Conferences, especially in Latin America, have publicly protested at abuses which exists in their countries. Such vigilance should continue and clear cases of abuse should be denounced to both national and international agencies. A simple signature on a formula of consent is not sufficient proof of the full and informed consent of a person, especially if payments or the provision/deprival of benefits are linked to consent.

5. In speaking of *contraception*, the Holy See Delegation recalled that the Church's moral objection has recently been repeated with renewed vigour. However, contraception was universally proposed by the delegations and appeals were made for the broadest availability of contraceptives for the widest number of persons (where possible free of charge). There was no attempt to address the moral dimensions of contraception. The guiding "ethical" principles of those advocating such policies are the "medical acceptibility" of the method proposed and the need to "defend" women against unwanted pregnancy.

For the advocates of such a policy adolescents are a group particularly "at risk", and thus a *Recommendation* was approved which calls on governments to provide adolescents with family planning information and services. The Holy See was not successful in having this recommendation removed, or substantially changed to include reference to the rights of parents. The text will now be invoked in many countries where there is still legal restriction on the distribution of contraceptives to adolescents. The Church must take a clear stand against any such new legislation which can only have negative effects on young people, on family life and on society as a whole

Local Church authorities should carefully watch to ensure that the International Youth Year is not exploited by powerful family planning organizations.

6. The Recommendations contain a specific reference to *natural family planning*, a reference which was defended by the Holy See. This will certainly serve as an incentive to governments to give greater recognition to NFP and to provide funding for NFP programmes and research.

Some international organizations have expressed their willingness to fund research projects and it might be useful to draw the attention of NFP groupings to this possibility. They might be able to indicate some suitable research projects, while at the same time, in order to avoid manipulation, they could monitor the research and the methodology proposed.

But one must also realize that, in the vision of the Conference, NFP was just another method of family planning, which was supported because it was acceptable to some groups for religious, cultural or ecological motives. On its part, the Church does not endorse NFP without qualification, and never as being on the same level as contraceptive methods. NFP provides a *means* to couples to regulate fertility in a manner which is respectful of the person and of marriage. One has thus to be careful about situating NFP within overall government family planning programmes, especially if, in reality, such overall programmes effectively promote a vision of sexuality which is in its very roots anti-family.

Natural family planning achieves its true aim when it is used for valid moral reasons and in the context of an overall vision of marriage and the family.

7. In speaking of family planning programmes and methods, the *Recommendations* make reference to respect for the cultural values of the various people. These references could be used by Church bodies in many countries in appealing for solution to population problems which respect the religious beliefs of persons But others will attempt to manipulate this section to encourage new forms of contraception which can be more readily accepted and practiced in developing countries.

8. The Mexico City Conference — and especially the participating delegations from developing nations — stressed consistently that population policies should be considered as constituent elements of socio-economic *development policies*, and not as substitutes for them. Episcopal Conferences should ensure that the population policies of their nations — and international population assistance received from abroad — are not considered simply in terms of providing family planning services Rather they should be aimed at the true human development of all the population.

The Church can be present in such areas of population policy as health care and education, the fight against infant mortality, family life education, the education of women and especially of mothers, concern for the young, the aging and migrants

There was an awareness at the Mexico City Conference that massive birth control programmes, especially where they do not respect the cultural values of the people concerned, have not achieved their goal. The Church can help people to move step by step to the realization that only policies which respect integrally the dignity of the person and which help all people to live in that dignity will provide genuine responses to the needs, including the demographic problems, of all nations.

Review-Article

The Relevance of Ignatius of Loyola

Reflections on the appearance of a new biography[1]

If we look back over twenty years, as Pope John Paul II invites us to do in calling an extraordinary synod, some of us may remember that in 1965 — when the Second Vatican Council was drawing to a close and Father Pedro Arrupe had been elected Superior General of the Society of Jesus — there were voices prophesying that as the Counter-Reformation was over and done with, so too was Ignatius of Loyola and his significance in the Church.

Today there are many who wonder sadly whether the Counter-Reformation is really a thing of the past. What seems beyond doubt is that Ignatius is still very much on the scene — but precisely in the vanguard of the movement for renewal launched by Vatican II Never has "Ignatian spirituality" been so assiduously cultivated as in the last two decades — and with such enthusiasm, by a wide variety of people who find in it an answer to their felt need as committed Christians There is not only survival but a remarkable revival, for it is thought that the *Spiritual Exercises*, as now understood and practised, are very much in tune with current theological trends and the insights of modern psychology into personal development.

The question naturally arises whether this "new look" has been achieved by dressing up a pensioned war veteran in the latest ecclesial fashion — a fashion that requires that nothing be sold on the spiritual market that does not bear the label of post-conciliar and growth-producing In plain language is the present interpretation of the *Exercises* faithful to the original intention of Ignatius; and if so, why has it taken so long to arrive at it ? Opinions will differ, as they always have with regard to Ignatius and his place in history But one objective fact stands out, which may provide a clue to the correct answer.

A fresh angle of vision

It may come as a surprise, but the fact is that the more personal writings of Ignatius were only published and made generally available in the present century. His major works — the *Spiritual Exercises* and the Jesuit *Constitutions* — have been well known, highly praised and severely criticized since his own days; but the *Autobiography* and the *Spiritual Diary* lay hidden in archives till a few decades ago,

1. **Ignatius of Loyola, Founder of the Jesuits. His Life and Work.** By Cándido DE DALMASES, S J. Translated by Jerome Aixalá, S J *Anand, Gujarat Sahitya Prakash*, 1985. Pp. xxii-362 Rs 40 (sewn paperback), 43 (clothbound).

when, finally, critical editions and annotated translations began to appear. Today it is recognized that just as the *Exercises* throw light on the *Constitutions* and reveal their inner meaning, so too the *Autobiography* gives an insight into the *Exercises* and their process — indeed it seems to have been composed with that very purpose. And any account of the personality of the author would be inadequate without an input from his *Diary*.

It is Ignatius himself who tells us that his spiritual doctrine is simply the statement of his own experience; and we can now better appreciate the significance of that experience because of the progress of the human sciences and our better grasp of the workings of the human mind and heart. The dominant human factor in his conversion was not (as is popularly believed) his reflection on pious literature, but (according to his own testimony) a gradual awareness, in the midst of reading and reverie, of a deeper level of being within himself, where he discovered the real Ignatius and encountered the real God: this was a powerfully liberating experience, beckoning him to further ventures into full personal freedom, and contact with all reality.

What emerges from the cumulative evidence that is so abundantly available to us now, is that Ignatian spirituality is based on the "person" and that it follows what is today acknowledged as the dynamics of personal growth — in contrast to the approach commonly adopted in Christian spirituality by leaning heavily on Greek and Scholastic philosophy and on the classical difinition of man as a "rational animal" There is good reason to affirm that the secret of the popularity of Ignatius, and of his relevance to our age, lies in his "personalism" This it is that puts him in line with current theology and psychology Correspondingly, present trends in psychology and theology help to penetrate more deeply into what Ignatius tries to express in his own limited vocabulary.

And so we find that his ideas are being studied, developed, and put into practice in a great variety of ways, including the production of an ever increasing volume of literature, which complements the already massive collection of original documents relating to him that has been critically edited and published in the series *Monumenta Historica Societatis Jesu* by scholars who have laboured in the last ninety years. What was still lacking till quite recently was a biography that would be on a par with all that is at present known and understood about Ignatius. Over the years there have been biographies in plenty, including several in English. But these earlier works are generally partial — in both senses of the word· that is, incomplete and tendentious. They are based on insufficient information and they take sides for or against their subject. The felt need now was for an account that would be both comprehensive and objective — and hopefully also readable, in quantity and quality.

And now a new biography

A man very well qualified to meet this need was Father Cándido de Dalmases, a member of the Jesuit Historical Institute in Rome

who has spent several decades editing writings by and on Saint Ignatius, in the series mentioned above. A few years ago he produced in Spanish: *El Padre Maestro Ignacio: breve biografía ignaciana.* The biography is indeed brief — just 258 pages, pocket-book size — but replete with data, packed together in a tightly-knit composition that has no room for frills. The style is inevitable austere but not unattractive, for he handles his material with an ease born of long familiarity. Controversial issues, like the Reformation, are treated with the calm detachment and the factual approach of a scholar Incidentally, we learn that Ignatius wrote a letter of congratulations to Philip II on his marriage to Mary Tudor. This is just one example of the wealth of information one can gather from this small book.

But the narrative does not get lost in trivialities. The pace is brisk and each statement adds a touch of authenticity and of life to the portrait that is presented. According to the policy followed by the publishers, there are no footnotes or references, so one cannot help wondering from where Dalmases could have got some of the details that he provides so lavishly For instance, with regard to Ignatius' first trip through Italy, on his way to Jerusalem, we are told that he set off in the company of a woman with her son and daughter, and met with an adventure. The story is obviously taken from the *Autobiography*, which however makes no mention of a son and seems even to exclude the presence of such a person What other source could there be for this particular ?

Some questions of this type — if anyone is curious — can now be answered by looking up the translation into English, which is well equipped with study-aids It is entitled · *Ignatius of Loyola — Founder of the Jesuits· his life and works*, and makes a handsome, even impressive volume, as one may expect from the Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, Anand The editor, Father George Ganss — himself a veteran Ignatian scholar who is about to retire at the age of eighty from the office of Director of the Institute of Jesuit Sources, in the U S A. — has a very interesting and useful introduction in which he gives what he calls the pre-history and history of Dalmases' biography, and also the reasons why notes and an index have been supplied This addition has meant an enormous amount of work, but was surely worth the trouble, for it greatly enhances the value of the book as a ready reference for just about everything concerning Ignatius.

The translator is Father Jerome Aixalá — another veteran scholar, well known to Indian readership — who however does not claim sole credit for the finished product. Rather, he explains that his draft was submitted to a meticulous revision ("word by word"), with consultations stretching across three continents, in order to ensure fidelity to the original It is not possible to determine how much may have been gained in accuracy by such elaborate processing; but those who are acquainted with Aixalá's literary and linguistic competence may doubt whether something has not been lost also — in clarity and elegance, and ultimately in accuracy itself. The printed text reads well enough, but there are instances of awkward phrasing

where the meaning is obscure, to say the least. For example, it is mentioned that on the eve of his death, "Ignatius ate a good supper, one ordinary for him" (p. 294). From the Spanish, it would seem that he did not eat much, though it was not as little as usual: "*Ignacio cenó bien, para lo que solí'a*" (p. 251).

Looking forward to a centenary

Occasional flaws do not detract from the great service that this book can render — a service that will be all the more appreciated in view of the fast approaching fifth centenary of the birth of Saint Ignatius, in 1991, which is already seen as an incentive to delve deeper into his spiritual legacy The publication of this biography by the Gujarat Sahitya Prakash augurs well for an active Indian participation in a worldwide venture.

Ever since the International Congress on the *Spiritual Exercises*, held at the Castle of Loyola in the summer of 1966, our country — or the Indian Assistancy, to use Jesuit jargon — has been making a significant, even if not much publicized, contribution to Ignatian studies We may well believe that there are some areas in which we would be particularly competent, or at least especially concerned, to make further progress The very basic insight of Ignatius, which we have called the awareness of a deeper level of being within oneself, is something that could claim privileged attention from us. But there is also the practical application of this insight to a number of problems facing humanity today We shall conclude these reflections on the relevance of Ignatius of Loyola by just touching on one such problem that is daily growing in importance: the problem of achieving meaningful, productive dialogue.

Everywhere there is a great cry for fruitful dialogue — in every sphere of human life, at every level, in all directions And there is an anguished search for effective rules of procedure, that could secure really satisfying communication, between individuals, groups, nations and races The traditional analysis of communication sees in it the two component elements of content and expression we must have something to say, and find an adequate way of saying it We can do both because we are rational animals. It is interesting to note that Ignatius has this model in mind when he speaks of communication as the channel of the apostolate, in the Jesuit *Constitutions*: "So one must assiduously cultivate human means and acquired skills, especially sound and solid doctrine and the way to get it across to an audience in sermons and lecturés, and how to deal and converse with people" (n. 814).

But in the *Spiritual Exercises* he enters much more deeply into the question: he recognizes that real communication between human beings must be two-way, must be true dialogue; and, moreover, that the contact that is established must be at a level more profound than content and expression, the level of person. In a little-known introductory paragraph he says· "So that both the director and the retreatant may be mutually benefited, it is to be supposed that every

good Christian is more inclined to accept the statement of another than to reject it. If he cannot accept it, he should ask for an explanation; if the explanation is itself unacceptable, he should put the other right, with love; if this does not work, let him employ every means available that the statement may be satisfactorily explained and found acceptable" (n. 22). Note: *mutually... with love... acceptable.*

We have here a mutual acceptance that goes beyond any agreement or disagreement in judgement, and like or dislike in feeling. It is an acceptance of the other as other, with perfect freedom to be other; it is not based on understanding but strives for understanding. It is an attitude of openness at the personal level that greatly helps to grasp and appreciate the truth of things at the level of sense and intelligence. It enables one to reach out and transcend the limitations of one's own perception and to assimilate the vision of the other, of all others, of the whole world, of God.

Parmananda R Divarkar, S.J.*

*Fr Divarkar, former Assistant General of the Society of Jesus, is well known for his writings and lectures on Ignatian spirituality He now resides as St Xavier's College, Bombay 400001

Continued from p 432.

also contains some important articles on Christian identity and obedience, Dominican spirituality, and an attractive biography of the great Dominican scholar Albert the Great

A random collection, one finds here an unavoidable repetition of the author's pet ideas Although the book is mainly addressed to the affluent Western society it is applicable to all Christians for his message is based on the gospel reinterpreted according to the needs of our time The Christian truths expressed in this book offer matter for meditation and are a veritable treasure for preachers

S Francis, S J

Crisis and Change The Church in Latin America Today By Edward L Cleary, O P *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Book*, 1985 Pp vi-202 $ 11 95

The title clearly shows the content of the book With a long experience in Latin America the author critically analyses the changes that are taking place in that continent in general and in its Church in particular, from the sociological point of view

The first chapter deals with the forces which are responsible for the renewal of Latin American Church from stagnation The outcome of this renewal gave a new orientation to the Church to help it face the pressing needs of the time This is expressed in the documents of Medellin and Puebla Conferences, which are treated in detail in the second chapter

The definite stand taken by the Hierarchy in favour of the poor encouraged many theologians to develop the theology of liberation The historical development, methodology, the main themes, and the present trends in the liberation theology are given succinctly in the third chapter The major structural changes which are taking place in the Latin American Church come from the grassroots Christian communities and the emergence of the laity The fourth and fifth chapters are devoted to these topics. The consequences of the Latin American Church's involvement in politics leading to a conflict with the military regimes prevailing in the majority of the Latin American countries are presented in the last chapter

The author concludes that Latin American Church is leading the universal Church into a new era through its new orientation under the influence of the theology of liberation The extensive bibliography at the end of the book is valuable The author's insights into the entire Latin American scene and the Church's relation to it are enlightening The book is recommended to all those who are interested in liberation theology

S. Francis, S.J.

Book Reviews

Biblical Hermeneutics

God of the Lowly. Socio-Historical Interpretations of the Bible Edited by Willy SCHOTTROFF and Wolfgang STEGEMANN *New York, Orbis Books*, 1984 Pp. 172 $ 9 95.

This book, born from a study group on a "materialist reading of the Bible", is a collection of studies translated from the German (1979) in which a number of biblical texts from the OT and NT are analysed The authors use a method of analysis which embodies the traditional historical critical method, where necessary, but pays special attention to the study of the *socio*-historical contexts in which the texts arose, to which they are addressed and in which the events of the OT and the life of Jesus unfolded Such a method is described as a "materialist" reading of the Bible The aim of the authors is to show how the socio-economic and political situation affects very radically the formation of the texts, the history of Jesus, and also the interpretation of the texts over the ages Truth is concrete The authors' suspicion is that other methods of study have distorted, failed to emphasize or obscured the deep relationship between faith and the actual historical situations, and especially the fact that the actual poor are the real subject of the Bible In the NT the historical Jesus and his disciples who, as poor, had a natural solidarity among the poor, have been replaced by a Jesus and disciples who have indeed a solidarity with the poor and all who are little, yet are no longer among the poor themselves

In the first part of the book there are two "reflections" The first is a short letter from a German pastor to the study group in which he outlines what he expects from a materialist reading of the Bible. The second explains what one author means by a materialist reading

This essay surveys the work of Belo, Clévenot and Casalis, the classical figures in materialist reading, and their critique of the "idealist" tendency of classical exegesis, its ideological stance and its distance from reality and history. The author explains the method, its limitations and goals, and informs us about groups who are involved in this type of hermeneutic and how the choice of the term "materialist" was made under the influence of Marx's theory about literature Because of the limited utility of the historical critical method, and because of the importance which ought to be given to the text itself, the author, Kuno Füssel, favours the use of structural analysis of the text. He summarizes his description of the method in these words. "A materialist reading of literary texts may be described, from the viewpoint of methodology, as an effort to draw profit from the socio-historical analysis of the production and reception of texts, on the one hand, and from the determination of their specific literary form, on the other, for an intensive reading In the process, the social background for the analysis is derived from historical materialism as a theory of the formation and history of societies. This is followed by a consideration of the text on the basis of linguistic structuralism" (p 23)

The method outlined is very exacting and the studies in the Book more or less follow it The structuralist influence is minimal. However, the studies are characterized by the common intention that the biblical text be effective and alive in to-day's world, challenging the Christian community

There are three studies of OT texts· a socio-historical study of Amos' ministry, a study of the role of the political praxis in Jeremiah's prophetic ministry, and the description of the social class and situation in which Koheleth arose. Each study reminds us that biblical texts belong to a concrete historical situation I found these studies enlightening and the only major question I would ask concerns the analysis of the socio-economic situation of Koheleth's period Further questions not addressed to in the studies is the later redaction of the text and the inter-relationship between a particular text/book and the whole book or the OT/NT.

The second part of the work concentrates on the NT. After a brief introduction there is a reflection on "Why and in What Sense Must Theology Be Materialist ?" The author, Dorothee Sölle, critiques the split between Body and Spirit and highlights the need to take material existence seriously, in its dimensions of body and society A quotation from Nietzsche, "Brethren, be faithful to the earth", in a sense summarizes the thrust of her thought

Exegetical essays on three texts follow the series of Marcan conflicts Mk 2. 1-3·6, the Sabbath controversy Mk 2: 23-8, and finally the Matthean parable of the Vineyard Workers (Mt 20: 1-16) The final chapter is an historical and theological discussion of G Theissen's thesis about "Vagabond Radicalism in Early Christianity" from his *Sociology of Early Christianity*

In the study of the texts the authors rely heavily on the historical critical method and the two source hypothesis The added dimension is the inquiry into the socio-historical setting of the life of Jesus and of the early community, which explains the transition from the situation of Jesus' ministry to the actual text These facts should guide interpretation

In Mk 2 1-3 6 the author sees a major shift from Jesus' critical attitude to his contemporaries to a situation of deep enmity of the Marcan community, seeking to consolidate its identity, towards the larger Jewish community Such a stance of anti-Semitism is also an expression of a questionable Christian absoluteness Both aspects are seen to have repercussions today Without entering into a detailed critique, we judge the author over-interprets the texts and underinterprets the conflicts within the very life of Jesus with his own people

The interpretation of Mk 2 23-28 relies heavily on the historical critical method and its hypothetical analysis We think that the author does not establish his major point that the disciples were hungry and belonged to, and symbolized, the many who faced acute hunger during Jesus' ministry, about whom he was concerned In the author's mind the Matthean text 12 7 reflects the more original response of Jesus, obscured by the later redactional interpretations

Again we judge that the study of the Parable of the Vineyard workers misses the perspective of the text, the larger context of Mt 19. 1-20 34, and does not reflect the original meaning of Jesus The author concentrates on the lack of solidarity of the grumbling workers who were hired first with the workers who were hired last The latter group are a symbol of the least and needy. The parable is explained as an expression of the love command and an interpretation of Mt 25 31-46.

The socio-historical dimension is an essential aspect of any adequate interpretation The centrality of the poor and the primary, though not exclusive, attention of God and Jesus to the poor is unquestionable, yet neither the OT nor the NT are books of social reform. The NT studies suffer from the weaknesses of the historical critical method, and conclusions and interpretations both exegetical and socio-historical are based on too many hypotheses to be stated as certain and sure conclusions The situation of European Christianity and society in the '70ies has deeply influenced the studies which re-act to the Christian blindness to the socio-economic implications of their faith

The book is for serious students of the biblical text The essay on the Materialist Method is a challenging study, and the other essays illustrate attempts to make the biblical text relevant today This book along with two other studies of biblical hermeneutics *Art and Meaning* and *Biblical Interpretation and the Church* reviewed hereafter, would be useful texts for post-graduate student discussion and valuable for those interested in the ferment, problems and challenges facing biblical interpretation, when "method" and contemporary relevance are the focal points

Patrick MEAGHER, S J

Art and Meaning: Rhetoric in Biblical Literature. Edited by David J A CLINES, David M GUNN and Alan J HAUSER, *Sheffield*, 1982 JSOT Supl 19 Pp 266 No price

"The title of this book expresses the viewpoint common to all the contributors that Biblical authors were artists of language Through their verbal artistry — their rhetoric — they have created their meaning. So meaning is ultimately inseparable from art, and those who seek to understand the Biblical literature must be sensitive to the writer's craft" (Preface)

The approach to the study of Biblical texts from this viewpoing is called "Rhetorical Criticism" (RC) This is more an overall tendency than a new method. It incorporates other critical

methods yet gives a justifiable pre-eminence to both the literary character and final form of the text. Many Christians find results of critical studies of the Bible unsatisfying. This book provides an "approach" scientifically exacting, yet satisfying because of the interest in the final text (a synchronic rather than diachronic emphasis) and the meaning of the text which is to be grasped by attentive study of the literary-rhetorical means of communication.

The opening chapter surveys and clarifies the confused world of critical methods used in the study of the Bible and situates RC within this world, describing aspects of the approach. The other chapters are studies of texts from the OT, though the literary structure of Luke 1-2 and "The Pattern of the Fourth Gospel" are also included. These essays originated as Papers for a JBL Seminar on RC. The essays illustrate the use of RC in the study of the following texts. Genesis 2-3, Ex 1. 1-14; Ex 7-11, Ex 1-14, Num 12, Is 28; Is 51 1-16; Ps 22 and texts of Job's Friends.

The studies approach the texts from various angles as the titles of the chapters indicate "Genesis 2-3 The Theme of Intimacy and Alienation", "The Hardening of Pharaoh's Heart", "Plot, Character and Theology in Exodus 1-14"; "Humility and Honor A Moses Legend in Numbers 12", .. The book is an education in this method of approaching the biblical text We judge the "approach" to be both sound and fruitful. The essays are of a high standard. They illustrate many facets of RC, the larger aspect of text, namely, its structure and totality, and the particular detailed literary ways an author communicates by means of his choice of words and phrases, his use of key words, the play on words, the use of story lines, his style, the small literary structures like chiasm, the use of poetic imagery and language. . The only major criticism would be the tendency in a few studies to over-interpret the text.

The book is educative, yet not for beginners, as the authors analyse in detail texts and there is a constant reference to the original transliterated into roman characters. However the Hebrew is also translated into English. To grasp the artistry of the biblical author and the significance of his choice of vocabulary at times depend on a basic knowledge of Hebrew and a literary initiation into the study of literature.

The book will be appreciated by post-graduate students and readers who have a keen interest in Scripture. As RC has a considerable impact on biblical studies today and rivets its attention on the actual text and its meaning, this book is highly recommended to those who wish to explore the text better and to have a rich method for their search. One of the valuable aspects of this collection of studies is the fact that each chapter illustrates different facets of RC, the way in which RC is adapted to different types of texts, and the use different scholars make of RC in their analysis and interpretation.

P. M. MEAGHER, S.J.

Biblical Interpretation and the Church. Text and Context. Edited by D. A. CARSON *Exeter. The Paternoster Press*, 1984. Pp. 240. £ 6.95.

This collection of studies is sponsored by the Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship and is the first fruit of their "Faith and Life" study unit The study group's mandate from the WEF "was to explore some of the hermeneutical issues that bear on the tasks of world-wide missions" (7). The concern of the studies is applied hermeneutics. Some potential readers may immediately lose interest in the book because of the evangelical commitment of the authors However, the contents, the revelance of the hermeneutical issues raised, and the practical and concrete concerns as well as the quality of the essays make this a highly interesting and challenging collection for all Christians and in a particular way for Christians in the South American, Asian and African world The central concern is the Church, her mission and this mission in the culturally diverse and socio-economically broken world of today. The authors are committed to the authoritative Word of God and the actual world.

The chapters of the book are entitled: 1. A Sketch of the Factors Determining the Current Hermeneutical Debate in Cross-Cultural Contexts; 2. The Church and the Kingdom of God: Some Hermeneutical Issues; 3. The Church in the Gospel of Matthew: Hermeneutical Analysis of the Current Debate; 4. Interpreting the Biblical Models of the Church: A Hermeneutical Deepening of Ecclesiology; 5. Principalities and Powers: Opponents of the Church; 6. The Church in African Theology· Description and Analysis of Hermeneutical Presuppositions, 7 The Church in the Liberation

Theology of Gutiérrez: Description and Hermeneutical Analysis; and finally 8. *Social Justice: Underlying Hermeneutical Issues*.

These titles indicate the relevance of this book. The authors, coming from seven different countries, are fine scholars whose religious commitment does not lessen the scholar quality of their studies. There is an underlying concern that the full truth and power of God's Word and the meaning of the Church and her mission have been detrimentally affected by certain types of biblical studies and some contemporary currents of theological thought and Christian action or inaction. However, the concern is for a richer and fuller grasp of the truth and an appropriate Christian way of living in the world.

In the opening and key study Carson takes up some crucial hermeneutical issues which are illustrated in the other studies: the primacy and authority of the Word, two types of pre-understanding in exegetical work — one which is functionally non-negotiable yet is open to change under the influence of the Word, and the other which is immutable and non-negotiable, rising from a world view at variance with the Bible and unwilling to be questioned by the Word, the problem of respect and genuine dialogue with the biblical text, within its own horizons, in the New Hermeneutic, the question of the canons within the canon, namely the ways a part or parts (ideas, books, paradigms, themes) act as the interpretative key of the whole Bible, and finally the lack of self-criticism in much biblical study

France's essay on the Church and the Kingdom is an excellent challenge to much loose biblical use of this phrase and reality The Kingdom of God is in danger of becoming an ideological phrase whose content rises from the ideology and not the Word of God The study of Clowney of the difference between metaphor and model and the danger of making biblical metaphor(s) into model(s) is rich and enlightening Respect for the contextual background of the metaphors and for the fact that they are evocative, complementary and irreducible to concepts and models, enables us to appreciate the rich diversity and pluralism in the biblical descriptions of the reality of the Church The metaphors preserve the unity within diversity, prevent disfiguration or half truths and the dominance of an inadequate model of the Church.

The two chapters on the socio-economic dimension of the Church's mission underline its importance and the dangerous lack of the social and liberative dimension in much Christian life, self understanding and mission. The studies are challenging, a counter-balance to other emphases, insightful from the point of view of hermeneutics, honestly exposing inadequacies or onesidedness of thought and praxis from the right and left. As liberation theology has not yet found an adequate hermeneutical methodology, so neither have the authors been able to adequately integrate the various aspects of the Church's mission or the relation of faith and justice.

Another study which enters into the field of the socio-economic understanding of the mission of the Church is the study of the interpretations of "Principalities and Powers" in terms of the evil socio-economic and political structures of our society. O'Brien raises important hermeneutical questions, surveys the history of this interpretation, and insights on the negative personal nature of the realities referred to in these two terms Not all exegetes would agree with his conclusions, though we agree that the common equivalence of Principalities and Powers with evil structures is questionable

The study by Maier has valuable historical and exegetical information on the exegesis of the Primacy text, yet we judge a confessional prejudice has not left him sufficiently open to the possibility, at least, that Mt 16 16-19 are not all words of the historical Jesus

There is only one explicit cross-cultural study in a strict sense The author critiques various interpretative keys used to construct an African theology based on the Bible He emphasizes the importance of the local Church and the danger of a pan-African theology

This book is worth careful reading because crucial hermeneutical questions are raised in the context of real theological issues which all the Christian churches face To some the stance of the authors will be too cautious, tending to be "conservative". For them the book would then serve as a good exercise in self-criticism. To others the book will uncover the challenges of searching for sound exegetical methods which lead into theology and praxis The challenge is to preserve the integrity of the Word and its authority and also safeguard the reality of our world so that a real dialogue takes place and the Word becomes the living Word of the living God for us The crucial area of the Church's self-understanding has been chosen as the uniting thread in all these

studies, especially her mission in the world.

P. M. MEAGHER, S.J.

Reading the Old Testament. Method in Biblical Study. By John BARTON. *London, Darton Longman and Todd*. 1984. Pp. xvi-256. £ 7.95.

"This book has three aims: to survey the methods currently used in the study of the Old Testament in such a way that it becomes clear how they are interrelated, and what goals they are meant to achieve; to set the Old Testament study against a wider background of literary criticism; and to argue a case against the pursuit of 'correct methods'" (p 198). These three points are developed in twelve chapters.

By way of a general background for the study or reading of the O T. Dr Barton, borrowing from structuralism and form criticism, stresses the importance of two basic notions: Literary Competence and Genre Recognition (ch. 1). The aim of biblical criticism is to understand the text This presupposes in the reader 'competence', awareness or the ability of recognizing environmental context, so that he may 'recognize the genre', the kinds of meanings certain types in O.T literature can have (v.g. wisdom or apocalyptic) Against that background the traditional critical approaches to the O.T. are surveyed analysis of sources, form criticism, and redaction criticism (chs 2-4) Ecclesiastes then is explored as a sample study (ch 5)

The shortcomings of the historical-critical approach to the O T have been conducive to the appearance of two recent methods of reading the O.T.: the canonical approach i.e. reading the Bible as Scripture (chs 6-7), and biblical structuralism (chs 8-9) Barton is critical of both structuralism and canonical criticism (chs 10-12), but he recommends a sympathetic approach to all systems giving a fair outline of the achievements and shortcomings of biblical criticism. — "In principle, structuralists are concerned with *analysis* rather than with exegesis they are not so much proposing new interpretations of texts as trying to show how any interpretation, old or new, comes to be the appropriate interpretation of a text" (p. 121). Structuralism is essentially a *theory* about the ways how texts can have meaning, not a *method* for uncovering new meanings of the texts. Barton reproaches to structuralism "its unreasonable hatred of authorial intention, referential meaning, and the possibility of paraphrase and restatement" (p. 191). In spite of its deficiencies Barton is convinced that "structuralism has much to offer the biblical scholar who is prepared to sit lightly to its ideological commitment and illusions of grandeur" (p. 190). Structuralism can supplement the historical-critical approach. — As regards canonical criticism, this cannot be established by literary (biblical) criticism but only by theological arguments

In the last chapter, "The Text and the Reader", Barton compares structuralism and 'New Criticism'. Canon criticism and structuralism are concerned with the text, author-centred, whereas the recent secular structuralism centers on the relation between the text and the reader. Though "at the deepest philosophical level the two movements diverge, the resemblances are still striking" (p. 131).

This is a beautiful book, well written, methodical and lucid. It is not an 'Introduction to the O.T.' in the meaning of an introductory treatise. It is not a book for beginners, more than some elementary knowledge is presupposed. The book deserves careful reading; the effort is rewarding. — At the head of each chapter a brief 'Preliminary Reading' is set out, at the end of the chapter some more titles are suggested for 'Further Reading' Besides these brief bibliographies a fuller bibliography(which does not claim to be exhaustive) is offered at the end of the book (pp. 237-248) together with Indexes of modern authors, subject, and biblical references.

J VOLCKAERT, S.J.

Resource Books

Documents on the Liturgy 1963-1979. Conciliar, Papal, and Curial Texts. By the INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON ENGLISH IN THE LITURGY *Collegeville, Minnesota, The Liturgical Press*, 1982. Pp. xvi-1496. n.p. given

This is an extraordinarily rich and very useful collection of all the official and semi-official documents on the liturgy issued by the central organ of the Catholic Church between 1963-1979 The large volume is fittingly dedicated to the memory of Archbishop A. Bugnini (1912-1982) who may be rightly considered the main architect of the post-Conciliar liturgical reform. As Mgr. Denis E. Hurley, Archbishop of Durban,

says in the Foreword, "For all interested in liturgy the volume is indispensable, conducive as it is to rapid and rewarding consultation. This is guaranteed by the method of classification, which is based on the chapters of the conciliar Constitution on the Liturgy, and the system of abundant cross-references. For the painstaking work involved in this there cannot but be an enthusiastic expression of gratitude to the staff members of the ICEL Secretariat who undertook the work".

The collection starts rightly with SC and the relevant sections of other Vatican II documents. No less than 554 texts are listed covering the 17 years when the liturgical reform was articulated in the Church. Only three of these documents antedate SC but are from 1963 itself, and they are given because of their immediate relevance to later texts. An important inclusion is the "Introduction" of all the rites, reformed and promulgated under the authority of Paul VI, specially the controversial General Introduction to the Roman Missal, the various editions of which may be studied from the footnotes presented Also given in footnotes are numerous answers of *Concilium* and the S. Congregation for Divine Worship published in *Notitiae*, and other useful information. The collection does not contain the rites as such, but the introductions accompanying them Less formal texts like papal addresses, homilies and letters are included One feels they may have been omitted, in spite of their relevance for understanding the mind of the Holy See on various liturgical matters.

To realise the richness of the collection we may note, for instance, that apart from many important cross references on the acceptance of the vernacular as liturgical languages, 26 documents deal on the language in the liturgy, most of them on the question of translations Besides 15 cross references to more general documents and 10 documents on chants for the mass, there are no less than 29 texts specifically devoted to music in the liturgy. Thirteen documents deal on the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours; etc. etc.

"The Appendix consists of. a list of the documents, by title, according to their date of issue; a list of documents, by number, according to their specific, technical classification within the general grouping. "conciliar", "papal", or "curial", an alphabetical list of incipits; a list of the replies or comments from *Notitiae* that annotate the text" (xiv). A complete list of abbreviations and a 54 page General Index complete the usefulness of this source book which cannot be missing from any theological library and which experts on liturgy will want to have at hand.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

Vatican Council II. More Postconciliar Documents. (Vatican Collection, Volume II). Ed. by Austin FLANNERY, O.P. *Grand Rapids, Michigan, Wm. B Eerdmans Publ. Co.*, 1982. Pp. xxii-920. £ 8.10 (available at Paternoster Press, Exeter).

Flannery's earlier volume containing a fresh translation of the Vatican II documents in chronological order and nearly 50 post-conciliar documents related to the former, was published ten years ago Volume II of the collection contains 57 more documents classified into Liturgy (16 documents), Ecumenism (4), Religious Life (9), Ministry (6), Current Problems (13), Education (3) and The Synod of Bishops (6), dating from 1966 to 1982 All the statements of the synods upto John Paul II letter *Familiaris Consortio* are included The translations are carefully done, from the original language, not necessarily the Latin version, at times as officially promulgated by the organism in question, at other times newly done, with occasional references in footnotes to the original expression, where the translation does not seem to do full justice to the text The addition of some useful footnotes (besides those of the original documents) and a reasonably complete index increase the usefulness of this handy collection where one can easily find important texts which at times prove elusive

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S J

Third World Resource Directory. A Guide to Organizations and Publications. Edited by Thomas P FENTON and Mary J. HEFFRON. *Maryknoll, N Y, Orbis*, 1984. Pp xx-283 $ 17.95.

This Directory is compiled with a view to the North American readership It provides abundant information about resources available in the field of the Third World and its relations to the US, especially in terms of groups or literature that favour action against the overt or hidden oppression of which the Third World countries are victims.

The Directory has two main parts. The first covers geographical areas (Third World: Africa; Asia and the Pacific; Latin America and the Caribbeans; Middle East). The second focuses on some specific issues (Food, Hunger, Agribusiness; Human Rights; Militarism, Peace, Disarmament; Transnational Corporations; Women). In each of these specific areas information is offered regarding Key Resources, US based Organizations, annotated Bibliography (Books, periodicals, pamphlets and articles), Audio-Visual Resources, Other Resources. Primarily useful for those for whom it is intended and for those who would have training or other contacts in the US, the bibliographies may help a wider public India is rather under-represented

G GISPERT-SAUCH, S J.

The Nyaya System

L'autorité du Veda selon les Nyāya-Vaiśesikas. By George CHEMPARATHY. *Louvain-la-neuve, Centre d'Histoire des Religions*, 1983 Pp. 102 N p

Gaṅgeśa's Philosophy of God. By Dr John VATTANKY, S J *Madras, The Adyar Library and Research Centre*, 1984 Pp xx-422. N p

Prof Chemparathy is well known for his studies on the Nyāya system, notably through his book, *An Indian Rational Theology* published in 1972 which is a presentation of Udayana's *Nyāyakusumāñjali* (10th cent. A D) (This is still a good source book for any course on philosophy.) Here he studies very carefully the various aspects of the doctrine of the authority of the Vedas in the history of the Nyāya and — less important — the Vaiśesika schools. The long list of authors studied offers a guarantee that the views presented here represent the long tradition of the Hindu logicians After defining the term, Chemparathy shows how under the influence of its own epistemological theory the Nyāya system grew from the idea that the Veda's reliable authors (*āpta*) were the ancient Rishis to the doctrine that God himself was the reliable source God's authority is the basis for the reliability of the Vedas How does the Hindu naiyāyika believer come to accept this idea that God is the author of the Vedas ? The tradition offers two arguments. One is based on the parallelism between the Vedas and the "empirical" sciences (i.e. medicine, and magic?): as these are known to be valid *from their results* (*pravṛttisāmarthyāt*), so the Vedas which deal with efficacious actions (sacrifices) are known to be trustworthy because some of these actions have results verifiable in this world. From this partial verifiability one comes, by logical deduction, to accept the total trustworthiness of the Vedas, and since no human author could be found as the source of such wide trustworthiness, the source must be found in God.

The second argument for the reliability of the Vedas is the fact that they are accepted by "great people" (*mahājana-parigraha*) — an argument based partly on the authority of the qualitatively "great persons" and partly on the catholicity of the quantitatively "great number" of people accepting the Vedas. Theologians who have used the arguments of "universality" and "catholicity" in various forms of apologetics will be interested in the Indian version of the argument and the fine distinctions made in the Nyāya philosophical tradition (cf pp. 58-64) One will not forget that this argument has a respectable tradition it was used also by Cicero and Aristotle Chemparathy gives us in this booklet a clear, well-presented tradition on a major theological theme which theologians in India should not ignore.

The second work dealing on Nyāya presented here is by Fr John Vattanky who two years ago wrote for this Journal a lucid essay on the theological implications of the Nyāya system (VIDYAJYOTI, 1983, pp 334-341) In this book he offers us a mature work of scholarship that fully justifies the reflections made in that article The work consists of two parts The first, covering 150 pages, contains an account of the history of the Nyāya system from the point of view of the problem of the existence of God. It covers from Gotama's *Nyāya Sūtras* (possibly about the beginning of the Christian era ? Vattanky is not interested in dates) down to Gaṅgeśa, in the midst of the *nava nyāya* renaissance, author of the *Tattvacintāmaṇi*, possibly around the 12th or 14th century. This long history is not one of a smooth flowering of a theistic philosophy: it is a history of fierce controversy specially with the redoubtable logicians of the Buddhist schools and those of the Mīmāmsaka tradition, both of which denied the existence of God and the validity of the Nyāya arguments in this regard. Echoes of that great controversy still linger in the academic corridors

of India. The great names of this tradition of controversy are studied in detail: Vatsyāyana Pakṣilasvāmin, Uddyotaka, Vācaspati Miśra, the great Udayana, Vallabha the Logician, Śaśadhara and Gaṅgeśa on the Nyāya side. On the Buddhist side we have Dharmakīrti, Śāntarakṣita, Kamalaśīla, Jñānaśrīmitra and Ratnakīrti. This history of ideas presented here moves in a highly technical level and will not be easy to the uninitiated.

The second part of Vattanky's work consists of three sections: a 12-page summary analysis of the arguments of Gaṅgeśa in his section on God (*īśvaravāda*) within his monumental work, the *Tattvacintāmaṇi*; a literal and very careful translation of this section, presented below the Sanskrit text, both text and translation covering 78 pages, and Vattanky's own competent commentary on each paragraph of the work translated, covering more than 160 pages. A basic bibliography and an index complete this scholarly volume

On the value of this work I cannot do better than copy the authoritative comment of Prof. Gopikamohan Bhattacharya, of the Kurukṣetra University in Haryana, one of the foremost scholars on the Nyaya system He says in a fine Foreward: "I have gone through the translation carefully; it is done with accuracy The commentary brings out the meaning of the text clearly and the study is exhaustive and in some respects original. He has also studied carefully the *pūrvapakṣa* arguments in Dharmakīrti, Śāntarakṣita, Jñānaśrīmitra and Ratnakīrti And contrary to earlier beliefs that in the Nyāya tradition everything connected with the problems of God had been already said by Udayana in his *Nyāyakusumāñjali*, Dr Vattanky has shown conclusively that Gaṅgeśa has made original contribution on important topics He has also shown that even for Gaṅgeśa the Buddhist position of the school of Dharmakīrti forms an important *pūrvapakṣa* All these — the exactitude of his translation, the faithfulness of his commentaries, and the rigour of his studies — show that Dr Vattanky is carrying on the traditions of the eminent scholars under whom he had the good fortune to study"

Vattanky divides the text he presents into logical sections and subsections, and keeps the same division in the summary of the argument, in the text, the translation and the notes: this certainly facilitates the study. I would have liked some more peripheral information to be given in the book: the probable dates of the authors mentioned, the origin of the edition of the Sanskrit text printed, even perhaps a complete outline of the *Tattvacintāmaṇi* within which the *īśvaravāda* section falls.

The work is necessarily technical and the translation supposes the capacity to accept the technical meanings given to English words without which the translation does not make much sense Thus, for instance, "subject" will not be rightly understood unless mentally we give to the word the full meaning of its original *pakṣa*, which could be translated also as thesis, matter under study, etc. The work and comments of Vattanky have shown how wrong Jacobi and other early indologists were in dismissing Gaṅgeśa too lightly. Readers of this journal will be interested in knowing that Roberto de Nobili quoted with admiration and studied the *Tattvacintāmaṇi* With Prof Bhattacharya we also hope that Fr Vattanky will continue his scholarly studies in his field and offer us other equally scholarly works

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S J

Theology

Tell Us Our Names Story Theology from an Asian Perspective By C. S SONG *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis*, 1984 Pp xii-212 $ 10 95

As the subtitle indicates, this is a book of theological reflections having stories that mostly take place in the Asian scene as the starting point The use of parables is not uncommon in the religious sphere The novel thing here is the use made of such parables for theological discourse The stories are taken from the folk tales of Asia, as well as the fairy tales of the West One tale makes use of an OT fable Each tale as taken as the basis on which the theological reflections in built up.

In the preface the author states that these ten essays are an invitation to a reconstruction of theology There are five theological subjects treated methods in theology, ecumenism, mission, dialogue and politics They converge in that they attempt to wrestle with the question of how we, Christians, should reappropriate faith in Jesus Christ in our culturally, religiously and sociopolitically pluralistic and divisive world

Song begins by giving ten positions regarding methods in theology, and clarifying what should be kept in mind

when one attempts to theologise in the specific context of Asia today. He insists on the very special importance of the context. On ecumenism Song insists once again on the need to see things from the perspective of the partner in dialogue. For him ecumenism is not merely concerned with the Christian denominations but with the whole inhabited world.

On the missions, the author insists on the need of knowing the "names" — hence the title *Tell Us Our Names*. He insists on knowing the other person as person to whom we go out Only then our mission can be incarnated as the mission of Jesus. This means a readiness to suffer, to die. The author sees the need for being "tattooed Christians" — tattooing draws blood and lasts. The superficial colour painting causes no pain but does not last. Song describes the seven stages of dialogue with the world community Such dialogue culminates in a common life, a common dream, a community This calls for a religion that is open to receiving from outside, from the folk songs and folk culture The last part of the book deals with politics. The author accepts the "dove ethic" and the "serpent politics", but advocates transcending them in the "politics of the cross" This leads one back to the "people politics" siding with the oppressed in their day to day struggles

The author is a Chinese theologian. His reflections are callenging and refreshing They provide a new way of looking at things and point to a method of theologising that emerges from the context Though the articles collected were written at different times between 1978 and 1982, there is a common thread running through theologising in the Asian context The book will be welcome by those interested in an indigenous theology It is a must for those in search of a method for theologising today

There is an Indian edition of this work published in 1985 by the Satprakashan Sanchar Kendra, Indore, 250 pages, costing Rs 25.

Ahmedabad Francis PARMAR, S J.

The Trinity and the Kingdom of God. By Jürgen MOLTMANN Translated from the German by Margaret Kohl *London, SCM Press Ltd*, 1981 Pp xvi-256 £ 7 95

This book contains a serious study of a difficult and traditional theme. The objective of the study is "to present a series of systematic contributions to theology" with a special effort "to consider the context and correlations of important concepts and doctrines of Christian theology" (p. xi).

It is common knowledge that not many books are published these days on the Trinitarian theology. One often wonders why. Probably some of the reasons are the rather abstract nature of the treatment of this basic Christian tenet through the Greek philosophical categories, and the over-emphasis on Trinitarian revelation being a mystery inaccessible to the believer. Moreover, today's insistence upon verification as a criterion for truth, and certain tendency to pragmatism in all matters, may also have contributed to the rather low priority accorded to the central Christian experience of God. Kant dismissed the dogma of the Trinity as a topic from which "nothing whatsoever can be gained for practical purposes, even if one believed that one comprehended it". Kant's sentiments seem to reflect those of many Christian communities through the centuries The present book can help to remove many of these prejudices and misunderstandings among the faithful

The book is marked by three features: a serious questioning of the traditional notion of the Godhead, a lucid presentation of the biblical, conciliar and theological elaborations of the doctrine of the Trinity, and a rather successful effort to derive inspiration from the Trinity for a genuine Christian and human social order The first two chapters concentrate on a rethinking of some of the traditional concepts or categories associated with the idea of God Some of the titles and sub-titles, like "the Pathos of God", "The Sorrow of God", "God and Suffering", are no doubt, provocative and show through which lines the investigation is undertaken An effort is made to derive some of the implications of the belief that God is love The Incarnation as a central event in history, the Resurrection of the Lord, the sending forth of his Spirit and the nature of the Trinitarian life in itself and in relation to the creation — these are treated in a manner that prepare the final section on "The Kingdom of Freedom"

From the point of view of the objectives of the book, this final section is quite successful. It starts by showing the relationship between the religious ideas of a given era and the political

constitution of its societies. Religions with monotheistic or polytheistic ideas of God are often found to have a corresponding influence upon the political constitution of society. An one-sided presentation of monotheism often leads to dangerous concepts like the divine right of kings, and to the emergence of societies where freedom is interpreted as lordship. The author tries to establish a relationship between a theology of the Trinity based on love as constituting the divine essence, and a human society where freedom is "community that can heal the wounds which freedom as lordship has inflicted, and still inflicts today" (p. 216) Thus the present Christian concern for the furtherance of the Kindgom of God is shown to have a solid basis in a theology of the Trinity.

From the Roman Catholic point of view the author's treatment of papal authority and the hierarchical structure may look scanty. For the author affirms that "the resurrection plays no part at all in this justificatory complex of ecclesiastical authority" (p. 201). The present book is a welcome theological contribution to the Christian concern for the building up of a society which is a reflection of the Triune God

T. K John, S J

In Search of the Sacred. The Sacraments and Parish Renewal By Mary C. Grey, *Wheathampstead, Hertfordshire, Anthony Clark*, 1983 pp 176 £ 4.95.

In this book Mary Grey deals with the sacraments and the sacramental life in three stages the pre-Vatican, period, wherein she describes their history and development, the Second Vatican period, as she describes the sacraments and sacramental life in the light of the teaching of the Council, and, lastly, the post-Vatican developments, which explain the sacraments and sacramental life in modern terms by recalling the data from the Scriptures and by reading the signs of the times in the Church These three approaches to the sacraments and the sacramental life represent three perspectives, the historical, the ecclesial, and the Christ-event perspectives, without, however, making hard divisions between them Grey's search for the sacred in human life has brought out the meaningfulness and relevance of the sacraments in today's life

The first chapter deals with the sacrament as mystery, the mystery being God's love revealed in His Son Jesus and poured in the Spirit. The following six chapters deal with each of the sacraments, the sacrament of reconciliation and anointing being treated together in ch. 5 under the heading "Conversion and Healing". The eighth and last chapter is by way of conclusion to all that has been said. From the Christian perspective life is a sacramental journey "This particular journey has been an attempt to view the Sacraments as a discovery of the sacred, but more particularly, the sacredness of being human and discovering this within a community It is a view of the Sacraments as an ongoing journey of faith, a process, not a series of isolated actions" (p. 174). The book, indeed, gives many and quite stimulating insights and perspectives It should be useful for parish renewal

Bernard Murmu, S J

God Among Us *The Gospel Proclaimed* By Edward Schillebeeckx *London, SCM Press*, 1982 Pp xi-258 £ 6.50

In the preface the author acknowledges that this book is a random collection of his Sunday sermons, lectures and articles with a purpose to expound the basic themes of his major books *Jesus* and *Christ*, for a wider public and in a simple way The sermons and articles are arranged under three groups The first group under the heading "The Way to Freedom" proclaims the mystery of Christ starting from Advent to Easter As a pastoral theologian S is interested in proclaiming Christ as one who came to liberate man from all bondages

The second group under the heading "Confessing Jesus" is concerned with the implications of our faith commitment to Christ. The author deals this subject as a commentary to the main clauses of the Creed, starting from belief in God as Creator to the resurrection of the body and eternal life His reflection on our faith commitment is centered around man's concern for those who are oppressed and in need, which is also God's concern Throughout the book one can see the author's deep love for the poor. In this respect this book can be considered as a treatise on liberation theology.

In the third group under the heading "Spirituality and Life-Style" the author develops a Christian spirituality based on the gospel and a synthesis of Eastern and Western spiritualities. The section

Ctd on p. 422 See also pp. 386, 396

Cum permissu Superiorum

Vidyajyoti

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Editorial

Sinhavalokana

There is an ancient Sanskrit metaphor, still used in Indian languages, which aptly expresses the content of VIDYAJYOTI this month. *Sinhāvalokana* means "the retrospective glance of the lion" which, while going ahead in search of its prey, now and then bends its neck backward to examine the terrain covered so far Every movement forward, every advance, needs a critical glance on the past, and this applies also to theological and pastoral activity

This month we invite our readers to a *sinhāvalokana* in various related fields Fr A PIERIS studies the various models of inculturation which have been used, consciously or unconsciously, in the history of the Church He thinks that the Church in Asia works at times with models which are either not adapted to its specific culture or come too late to be fruitful But this "backward glance" does not stop the march of the lion the author proposes what he thinks remains a fruitful model for Asia, the "monastic model" which, however, should be so updated as to incorporate the new consciousness of poverty arising from contact with the deprived in Asia

Fr M AMALADOSS has been concerned with the liturgical movement in India for nearly two decades He also casts a critical "backward glance" on the past efforts of inculturation in the liturgy, in order to promote a further progress He is both critical and positive: as a result of his critique he proposes new areas in which the incomplete task of creating an Indian liturgy could be advanced. It is high time now for the Church in India to resume in a critical way its responsibility to evolve various forms of liturgy which are better expressions of the Indian aspirations towards God

The growing interest in the Bible is also part of the growth of the Indian Church in the past few years Fr C. MIGNON casts a critical backward glance on a source which has been made widely available for study of the Bible He shows that Barclay's commentaries must be used with discernment. In the light of his critique we are led to realise the need to complement them with more solid and updated commentaries, if the Bible is to be a continued source of nourishment.

In the month of March this year VIDYAJYOTI, published an article by Fr Amaladoss on "Faith Meets Faith". The article has caused some eyebrows to be raised and brought a number of reactions, some

of which we publish in this correspondence column. Clearly it has focused attention on a very controverted area of contemporary theology. In the past ten or fifteen years a great deal of reflection has been done on this question not only in India but almost everywhere in the Christian world. Fr G. GISPERT-SAUCH presents a review article of eight books on this subject recently received for review in our journal. There are many other such books. From all these studies it is clear that the old theological model that considered the religions of the world at best as "natural" efforts, the expression of the "human" search for the divine, but did not see them as mediations of grace in any way, has been largely abandoned by theologians Ten years ago *Evangelii Nuntiandi* used this theology. It spoke of "natural religious expressions" most worthy of esteem, but which did not "succeed" in establishing with God any authentic and living relationship (no. 53) Even at the time Fr J Dupuis pointed out the shortcomings of this theology (VIDYAJYOTI,, May 1976, p. 230), which does little justice to the "ways of salvation" which believers consider their religions to be

Today, ten years later, people who have experience in dialogue and close contact with believers of other religions and have kept abreast of theological trends find this way of thinking inadequate and have largely abandoned it. Of course any Christian will affirm, as indeed most believers do, that it is only by God's grace that any effective relationship with Him is established Most theologians today would think that this gift of God's grace can be effectively mediated by various religions of the world In the perspective of the universal salvific will of God and an open theology of grace, they affirm that human beings cannot seek God unless He has sought them first

This position however, leaves open the Christian theological question of the significance of Jesus Christ in the universal history of grace. From the theological literature available two main trends seem to emerge today: one sees the "presence of Christ", an invisible and often unrecognised mediatorship of the risen Lord, in every encounter of grace between the living God and humanity. This trend stands by the New Testament affirmations of the universal mediatorship of Christ in all salvation, whatever concretely be the immediate way salvation is obtained The other school questions the meaningfulness of such an unrecognised universal mediatorship It affirms that Christ is the mediator of God's grace wherever his message, his presence, or his example have been recognised and accepted in faith This trend thinks that the extrapolation of this mediatorship to *all* humanity and to the whole history of grace is an expression of "love language" proper to all forms of intense personal encounter To such language, they say, no ontological significance should be attached *God* remains the universal Lord and Saviour, who continues to meet his people in many and different ways. That Jesus and his life have a high significance and a potentially universal value is not thereby denied. But this school of thought would find no meaning in the affirmation that faith in Christ is normative for all, or that his mediatorship is operative even when his life, death and resurrection have not been recognised. The debate continues.

Western Models of Inculturation: How Far Are They Applicable in Non-Semitic Asia?

Aloysius PIERIS, S.J.

HAD St Paul founded a church in Benares, Bangkok or Beijing and had he written an epistle to the Christians there, we would have had some scriptural norm or some kind of Apostolic tradition to follow in forging our ecclesial identity in the non-Semitic cultures of Asia. Granted that the early church might have had some such experience in the case of the "St Thomas' Christians" in Kerala or the Nestorians in Central Asia, the fact remains that the doctrines and opinions articulated as the authoritative tradition of the early church were almost exclusively born of her encounter with the Semitic and the Graeco-Roman worlds, and not with the Sino-Indian religiosity. Most Asian churches have no precedent to follow. They are called upon to create something new, the orthodoxy of which cannot be gauged from the available models.

The Europeanization of Christianity which accompanied the Christianization of Europe is, *in itself*, an excellent paradigm of indigenization. It reveals at least four strands of tradition which can be tabulated as follows

1. The Latin Model. incarnation in a non-Christian *culture*.
2. The Greek Model: assimilation of a non-Christian *philosophy*.
3. The North European Model. accommodation to a non-Christian *religiosity*.
4. The Monastic Model: participation in a non-Christian *spirituality*.

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*Fr A PIERIS is the editor of *Dialogue*, an international review for Buddhists and Christians, and director of the Tulana Research Centre, Gonawala, Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. His last contributions of VIDYAJYOTI were in April-June 1982. This article was first published in French in *Lumière et vie* (Lyons) vol. 23, no. 168, July-September 1984, pp 50-62. A German version appeared in *Orientierung* (Zurich) vol 49, no. 9, 15 May 1985, pp. 102-6.

I. The Graeco-Roman Models of Inculturation: Not Applicable in Asia

In listing the above models, we have followed the ascending order of their relevance in Asia. Strangely enough, the two standard examples cited in support of inculturation since De Nobili and Ricci are the first two (nos. 1 and 2 above) which, in our opinion, are the least applicable in contemporary Asia. We have at least four reasons for saying this.

Firstly, the theology of religions which is implied in and permeates the Latino-Hellenistic tradition is unhelpful in Asia, besides being also incompatible with the perspectives of Vatican II The Patristic tradition was consistently negative in its assessment of other religions, perhaps for valid reasons.[1] In the judgement of the Fathers, only the *culture* of Rome and the *philosophy* of Greece were worth being assumed by the church, i e., capable of being redeemed by Christ from the diabolical grip of the pagan *religion* Thus they seem to have initiated a "Christ-against-Religions Theology" which dominated the Christian thought for centuries (not excluding that of De Nobili and Ricci), till perhaps some Indians (both Christians and Hindus) of the last century sowed the first seeds of a "Christ-of-Religions Theology"[2] This theology has appeared in a mitigated form in the documents of Vatican II and is being developed further in the writings of the recent Popes[3]

Secondly, the separation of religion from culture (as in Latin Christianity) and religion from philosophy (as in Hellenic Christianity) makes little sense in an Asian society For instance, in the South Asian context, culture and religion are overlapping facets of one indivisible soteriology which is at once a view of life and a path of deliverance, it is both a philosophy which is basically a religious vision, and a religion which is a philosophy of life[4]

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1 Cf A Luneau, O M I, "To Help Dialogue The Fathers and the Non-Christian Religions", *Bulletin* (of the Secretariate for Non-Christians), 3 (1968) (serial no 7), p 14

2 For a historical note on this, see A Pieris, S J, "Der Ort der nicht-christlichen Religionen und Kulturen in der Entwicklung einer Theologie der dritten Welt", *Zeitschrift for Missionswissenshaft und Religionswissenschaft*, 66 (1982), pp. 243-5 and 249-53

3. In a document entitled *The Church — Non-Christians — Monks*, St Louis, U.S National Centre for Aide Intermonastère, 1982, Abbot Simon Tonini, O S B, shows that with the increasing exposure of the Popes to other religions, their openness too grows from mere condescension to positive and uninhibited admiration.

4 For a theological reflection on this, see A Pieris, "Towards an Asian Theology of Liberation Some Religio-Cultural Guidelines", in V. *Fabella* (ed), *Asia's Struggle for Full Humanity*, Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books, 1980, p 91.

The very word "inculturation" which is of Roman Catholic origin and inspiration[5] is based on this culture-religion dichotomy of the Latins, in that it could, and often does, mean the insertion of "the Christian religion minus European culture" into an "Asian culture minus non-Christian religion". This is inconceivable in the South Asian context just alluded to; what seems possible and even necessary, there, is not just *inculturation* but "in*religion*isation" of the church. I know that this way of putting it offends one's Latin sensitivity. Even a knowledgeable and progressive theologian like Congar who, with his accustomed openness, makes an honest effort to appreciate the theological frameworks of Indians like Amaladoss and Panikkar with their insistence on *Hindu Christianity* rather than Indian Christianity, does not hesitate to warn us of the "subtle and real danger" of syncretism and of the Christian faith being "contaminated" (*sic* !) by a non-Christian religion[6] These Indian theologians and their colleagues in the West are working on two different paradigms !

Instrumental Theory

Thirdly, the Graeco-Roman Model has bequeathed to the church what I have elsewhere analyzed as the "instrumental theory" of inculturation taken for granted in Western theology.[7] Greek *philosophy* was pulled out of its own *religious* context and made to serve the Christian *religion* as a tool for doctrinal expression, i.e , as *ancilla theologiae* — a medieval image already used by Clement of Alexandria and expressed in its classical form in Peter Damien's allegorical interpretation of Dt 21 10 sq[8] In this scriptural passage, God ordains that an Israelite who sees a beautiful woman among his captured enemies, could appropriate her as spouse so long as she would be of service. The conquest of another religion and the requisitioning of its beautiful philosophy to be at the service of one's own religion, constituted the basic policy which created the academic tradition in Western theology.

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5 In a careful study of the origin and meaning of the word "inculturation", Francis CLARK, S J , in "Making the Gospel at Home in the Asian Cultures", *Teaching All Nations* (now *East Asian Pastoral Review*) 13 (1976), pp 131-49, thinks that Fr J Masson, S J , was among the first to introduce the word into contemporary Missiology (*ibid* p 149, n 5)

6 Y CONGAR, O P , "Christianity as Faith and Culture" in *East Asian Pastoral Review* 18 (1981), p 313 This is the English translation of the Italian original, *Evangelizazzione e cultura*, Congresso Internazionale di Missiologia 5-12 Oct , Roma, Pontifica Università Urbaniana, Rome 1976, pp 83-103 Our reference is to the English translation

7 Cf A PIERIS, "Western Christianity and Eastern Religions (A Theological Reading of Historical Encounters)", *Cistercian Studies* no 1, 1980, pp 50-66 and no 2, 1982, pp. 150-171

8 As observed by W PANNENBERG, *Theology and Philosophy of Science*, London, DLT, 1976, p 10.

In the Asian context, this policy is unproductive to say the least. To pluck a philosophy out of its soteriological context is to deprive it of its life. To employ a dead philosophy to construct a Christian doctrinal system is an intellectual feat that can at most satisfy only the person who indulges in that exercise. David Snellgrove's treatise on the "Theology of the Buddhahood"[9] is a splendid illustration of it.

If this Greek manner of "instrumentalizing" philosophy is unproductive in Asia, the Latin practice of "instrumentalizing" a non-Christian culture in the service of Christianity can be embarrassingly counterproductive, resulting as it does, in a species of "theological vandalism" against which we warned the Asian theologians several years ago.[10] This fear has already been confirmed by reports reaching us In Thailand, recently, the Buddhists have reacted with bitter indignation against the church for allegedly usurping their sacred symbols for Christian use ! Inculturation of this type smacks of an irreverent disregard for the soteriological matrix of the non-Christian's religious symbolism and it easily lends itself to be interpreted as a disguised form of imperialism.

Different Historical Roles

The *fourth* and final reason why the Graeco-Roman model of inculturation succeeded in Europe but fails in Asia is that the historical circumstances surrounding the church in her early Mediterranean phase differ drastically from those of the twentieth century Asia. The Graeco-Roman model was a viable and even a justifiable process of indigenization, given the socio-political context of those early centuries when the imperial religion of Rome was in decadence and Christianity was in the ascendant. In fact it was through inculturation that the church salvaged the culture of the Greeks and Romans from being burried in the archives of archaeologists

The exact converse is true in Asia The imperial religion now in crisis is colonial Christianity, while it is the religion of the so-called "pagans" that is regaining vitality not only as a socio-political force that articulates the national ego of some of the decolonized countries, but also as a current of contemporary spirituality that is spreading through the length and breadth of the post-Christian West.

9. D SNELLGROVE, "Traditional and Doctrinal Interpretation of Buddhahood An Outline of a 'Theology' of Buddhahood", *Bulletin* (of the Secretariate for Non-Christians) 5 (1970) (serial no 13), pp. 3-24.

10 "Towards an Asian Theology of Liberation" (note 4), p 92.

Placed against this background, the inculturation-fever might appear to be a desperate last-moment bid to give an Asian facade to a church which fails to strike roots in the Asian soil because no one dares to break the Graeco-Roman pot in which it has been existing for four centuries like a stunted *bonsai*! No wonder the non-Christians are as much suspicious of the whole inculturation movement as some Liberation Theologians are sceptical about it.[11] In fact one Buddhist, voicing the widespread reaction of his co-religionists, has questioned the *bona fides* of the church in the following words:

> The so-called indigenization... appears to be a matter of tactics rather than one of appreciation and admiration of things indigenous. In other words it appears to be a comauflage resorted to with a view to breaking down the aperceptive mass of Buddhists and to proselytizing them by using the vast financial resources of the church It can be likened to the tactics of a chameleon which takes on the colour of the environment in order to deceive its prey[12]

II. THE NORTH EUROPEAN MODEL OF CHRISTIANIZATION: TOO LATE IN ASIA

If indeed the first centuries of Christianity do not point to the direction in which the church could seek to be "at home" in Asia, then the early medieval experience seems to offer at least a useful analogy to *understand* the Asian context. How far this third model is applicable in Asia today, is quite another matter

The terms of comparison are the North European *clannic* societies of the early middle ages, and the *tribal* societies still surviving in Asia. Their culture, in each case, can be described as basically religious, and their religiousness as essentially *cosmic*, a word we deliberately substitute for the "animist" of anthropologists It is contrasted with the *meta-cosmic* religions which postulate the existence of a Transphenomenal Reality immanently operative in the cosmos and soteriologically available within the human person either through *agape* (redeeming love) or through *gnosis* (redeeming knowledge) Such would be the Judaeo-Christian Faiths which are agapeic, and the monastic forms of Hinduism, Buddhism and Taoism which are gnostic.

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11. The reasons for this scepticism are given in A PIERIS, "Asia's Non-Semitic Religions and the Mission of the Local Church", *The Month* (London), 263 (2nd new series vol. 15) (1982), pp 83-5

12 G. VITANAGE, "The New Look with a Note: A Comment on Fr Mervyn Fernando's article on 'Is Adaptation Outmoded'", *Quest* 4 Colombo, 1969 (serial nos 33-34), pp 80f.

The Other High Religions Arrived Earlier

To extend further this comparison between the European prototype and the current Asian context, a very fundamental anthropological axiom has to be premised here, namely that these two species of religiosity (cosmic and metacosmic) relate to each other as natural complements. In fact a metacosmic religion (whether agapeic or gnostic) cannot be firmly rooted (i.e. inculturated) in tribal societies except within the context of their cosmic religiosity; conversely, a cosmic religion is an open-ended spirituality which awaits a transcendental orientation from a metacosmic religion It is therefore not a question of one replacing the other, but one completing the other in such a way as to form a bidimensional soteriology which maintains a healthy tension between the cosmic *Now* and the metacosmic *Beyond*.

Was this not the kind of inculturation that made Christianity "at home" not only in Northern Europe, but perhaps also in the South where the sap of cosmic religiosity was circulating beneath the veneer of Latino-Hellenic civilization ? In fact this is indirectly confirmed by Jean Delumeau's persuasive thesis that both the Reformation and the Counter-reformation were rigid conversion movements based on the belief that the 16th century Europe's rural masses had not yet been fully weaned from their pre-Christian "paganism" (some going to the extent of thinking Italy to be as "pagan" as India !) so that the church's apprehensions about inculturation in Asia at that time, specially in the case of the Malabar and Chinese Rites, could be partly explained by her inflexible stand against "paganism" at home [13]

We can then insist that this early medieval form of inculturation makes sense in Asia wherever the cosmic religiosity survives in its original format undomesticated by any metacosmic religion But, then, very few pockets of it are left in Asia today because these other religions have preceded Christianity by centuries and have already achieved in Asia that very kind of inculturation which Christianity accomplished with such success in Europe The *deva* beliefs in South Asia, the *Bon*-religion in Tibet, *Nat* worship in Burma, the *Phi* cult in Thailand, Laos and Kampuchea, *Confucianism* plus ancestor veneration in Vietnam, China and Korea, the *Kami* worship of *Shintoism* in Japan . . are all cosmic religions which provided a very fertile soil for the great monastic religions to sink their roots deep into the Asian ethos History shows,

13. Jean DELUMEAU, "Les Réformes, la protestante et la catholique, ont imposé aux masses la religion de l'élite", extracts from an address given at the Collège du France on 13 February 1975, and published in *Informations Catholiques Internationales*, 479 (May 1975) pp 21-3.

and sociology justifies, the phenomenon that one metacosmic religion already inculturated in a clannic society cannot be easily dislodged by another metacosmic religion except by protracted use of coercion, i.e. by an *irreligious* means of mass conversion.[14]

This means that, in Asia, Christianity had come a bit too late on the scene except perhaps in the Philippines and in some tribal societies of India and S.E. Asia where cosmic religions had remained intact. Hence, this third model of inculturation is also obsolete in the greater part of Asia.

Baptised in the Waters of Asian Religiosity

Whoever, therefore, thinks of inculturation not as an ecclesiastical expansion into non-Christian cultures but as the forging of an indigenous ecclesial identity from within the *soteriological* perspectives of Asian religions, has begun moving along the right direction. Let me then indicate three road signs which have already helped us move further along this new path.

Firstly, the bidimensional soteriology of the non-Christian religions wherein our cosmic involvement with the Present is tempered by a metacosmic orientation towards a Future which constantly relativizes the Here and Now, offers us a ready-made frame of reference for our spirituality, liturgy, ecclesial witness, social engagement and theological formulations. Secondly, Asian theology is not the fruit of excogitation but a process of explicitation, or more specifically a Christic apocalypse of the non-Christian struggle for Liberation Thirdly, since we only explicitate a pre-existent theology implicitly contained in the non-Christian soteriologies, the procedure adopted is not one of "Instrumentalizing" the non-Christian schemas, but one of assimilation through participation in the non-Christian ethos, a baptism in the Jordan of our Precursor's religiosity, a sort of *communicatio in sacris* which allows the "little flock of Christ" to feed freely on Asian pastures which it has been trampling for centuries. There is no danger of theological vandalism here.[15]

Here I think it quite appropriate to cite the example of the Benedictine monk, Swami Abhishiktananda (Henri le Saux) whose fair complexion and French accent were about the only things left of his

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14 For a detailed presentation of this thesis, see A PIERIS, "Der Ort der nichtchristlichen Religionen.. " (note 2), pp. 255-8, and "Towards an Asian Theology of Religions" (note 4), pp 78-80

15 For a biblico-theological reflection on this theological method, see A. PIERIS, "Asia's Non-Semitic Religions..." (note 11), pp. 87-90.

European past after his baptismal immersion in the waters of Hinduism. He had so well absorbed the Hindu spirituality (i.e. theology in the primordial sense of God-experience) that his many utterences on the Christ-Mystery (theology in the secondary sense of God-Talk) have become indispensable guide posts in the church's search for the Asian Face of Christ.

III. The Monastic Paradigm: An Approximation to the Asian Mood

The monastic tradition is just where the East is creatively silent in the West. Here I take West and East not primarily as geographical divisions but as two human urges, incomplete without each other, manifested phenomenologically in the *agapeic* and the *gnostic* idioms of the biblical and non-biblical religions respectively (see Part II). Let me insist that even within Christian orthodoxy, which has always been agapeic, there was a legitimate line of gnosticism and the "heretical" gnoses "were only as it were the embroidery along the edge of this continuous line."[16] Similarly the gnostic religions, specially Hinduism and Buddhism, are not without their own versions of agapeic (bhakti) religiosity.

In the formative centuries of Christian monasticism the gnostic spirituality of the non-Christian gradualy filtered into the agapeic religiosity of the monks. While this symbiosis was taking place in the silence of the monastic cells, the academic theologians of the church were busy experimenting with the legal language of the Latins and the philosophical thought of the Greeks to make "precision instruments" that would enable the human mind to fathom the Mystery of Christ, thus producing a vast corpus of theological literature that paved the way for Christological dogmas and, centuries later, for an overgrowth of scholasticism.

If, indeed, praxis is the first formulation of a theory, then the monastic tradition conceals a theology which, if discovered, can reddress the imbalance caused by academism.[17] Thomas Merton pioneered along this direction, and sharpened the church's monastic instinct blunted by centuries of neglect. He turned Eastwards, simply to rediscover the monk for the West. On the other hand it was perhaps because the monk was ignored by the academicians — and there were also monks

16. Louis Bouyer, *The Spirituality of the New Testament and the Fathers*, New York, etc, Desclée Company 1963 (*History of Christian Spirituality*, edited by L Bouyer, J. Leclerq, F Vandenbroucke and L Cognet, Part I), p 16.

17 Cf Reginaldo Gregoire, O.S B, "Esiste una teologia monastica ?", *In ter Fratres*, Roma, Fabriano, 27 (1977) pp 115-20.

among them—that he was able to enjoy so much freedom. If the Western Patriarchate can learn from its monks to blend the gnostic and the agapeic idioms, it would know to appreciate the kind of "inculturation" Asia needs today.

Despite many temptations to the contrary, the Western monk and nun have learnt that the *(gnostic) ideal of "fuga mundi"* (which influenced the early monastic interpretations of the Call Narratives, Mt 19: 21 and parallels, obviously in response to the contemporary demands of non-Christian asceticism), had to be complemented by an *(agapeic) involvement with the world's Poor* who mediate Christ's presence for us Thus true Christian renunciation of wealth was always considered to be made in favour of the poor so that from the anchoretic inceptions of the movement, as Lozano points out, the monks' search for God was inseparably associated with their service to and solidarity with the poor, at least in theory, if not always in practice.[18] When this balance between the gnostic and the agapeic components of spirituality was lost, as it often happened when concessions were made to Mammon, Gods' rival and man's enemy, then obviously corruption set in, and monasticism became like salt without flavour, fit to be trampled upon.

Voluntary Poverty and Forced Poverty

By its failures, even more than its successes, Western monachism has many lessons to teach the Asian Church. For, our continent is the oldest and the largest generator of *monasticism* besides being also the inheritor of the largest portion of the world's *poverty*. Hence, the church will be competent to converse with Asia if she learns from her own Christian monks the language of *gnosis* which is spoken by Asia's non-Christian monks, and masters also the language of *agape*, the only one that the Asian poor can really understand. The Asian monks speak of that spiritual enlightenment which ensures the *interior liberation* of human beings from their accumulative instinct; but the Asian Poor clamour for *social emancipation* from the oppressive structures into which this same accumulative instinct is organized today. The monks point to the "Metacosmic Beyond" as the light that exposes the sinfulness of the "cosmic Now" and the poor are both the victims of this cosmic disorder and the agents of its imminent overthrow.

Whenever the *poverty voluntarily practised* by Asian monks is not directed positively towards the alleviation of the *poverty structurally imposed* on the Asian masses, then the resultant revolutions have

18. John M. Lozano, C.M.F., *Discipleship: Towards an Understanding of Religious Life*, Chicago, Claret Centre for Resources in Spirituality, 1980, pp. 172-8.

adversely affected the feudalized monasteries of Asia, as for instance in Tibet and Mongolia. There, monastic poverty was not *socially* liberative. Hence, true inculturation is a rooting of the Asian Church in the *liberative* dimension of voluntary poverty. When a follower of Jesus opts to be poor for the sake of the gospel he or she would live not only in solidarity with the Asian monks in their quest for the *Metacosmic* Reality, but more so in solidarity with the Asian Poor who aspire for a *cosmic* order that is more just and holy.

A church inculturated in Asia is indeed a church liberated from Mammon, and is therefore necessarily composed of the Poor: Poor by option and Poor by circumstances In other words, inculturation is the ecclesiological revolution already initiated by *basic "human" communities* — with Christian and non-Christian membership, wherein *mysticism* and militancy meet and merge: mysticism based on voluntary poverty and *militancy* pitched against forced poverty.[19]

We are pleased that the Asian Monks' Congress which was convened under the aegis of Thomas Merton in 1969 began discussing inculturation of monasticism in Asia but soon bumped against the scandal of Asia's poverty in the second conference held in 1973, and quite spontaneously came to realize in 1980, the third meeting of its kind, that monastic poverty is not Christian if it is not practised in solidarity with Asia's poor [20] The monastic instinct of the church, if sharpened by the Gospel and not blunted by political naiveté, cannot go wrong in Asia.

There is one special thing that the Western monks or nuns can do for us if they, like Merton, sensitize the Eastern part of their being They can interpret us to the Western Patriarchate and defuse inter-ecclesial tensions that invariably occur when we announce the Good News *in our own tongues* to our own people (i e. inculturation), namely

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19 We can cite here at least four experiments made in Sri Lanka alone The most significant is the *Devasarana*, the monastery of the Anglican monk Yohan Devananda There his Monastic presence in a Buddhist culture is made to coincide with his socialist involvement with the Peasants' Movements specially among the farmers The *Satyodaya* group let by the Jesuit Paul Caspersz in Kandy is an experiment of quite another kind It is manifestly a sociological miracle, being a multi-racial, multi-linguistic and multi-religious community struggling hard to be a paradigm of a classless society in a country torn apart by ethnic conflicts. The *Christian Workers' Fellowship* is perhaps the first such group to appear in the history of the Asian Church It has a Buddhist, Hindu, Christian, and Marxist membership of both Sinhalese and Tamils, it operates in several places in Sri Lanka through basic *human* communities Fr Michael Rodrigo, O M I, has established a community at Buttala in the rural interior of Sri Lanka with similar aims

20 Cf Asian Monastic Conference, Kandy, Sri Lanka, August 84,-21 1980, Vanves, Aide Intermonastère, rue d'Issy 7, 1981, p 219.

that Jesus is the New Covenant or the Defense Pact that God and the Poor have made against Mammon, their common enemy (i.e. liberation).[21] For Liberation and inculturation are not two things any more in Asia ![22]

21. The theological method and idiom used in the *Asian Theological Consultation* (ATC) of 1979 was seriously misunderstood in Rome. The relevant documents are available at the *Centre for Society and Religion*, 281 Deans Rd., Colombo 10, Sri Lanka.

22. After a long debate on this point (see *Voices from the Third World*, Vol 2, no 1, June 1979), the members of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT) seem to have agreed that true inculturation and liberation almost converged not only in Asia but in other parts of the third world too. This can be inferred from the Final Statement of the EATWOT Fifth Conference held in New Delhi, 1981: cf. V FABELLA and S TORRES (eds.), *Irruption of the Third World*, Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books, 1983, pp 201-2.

Continued from p 484

logical sequence either within or between the several series of visions. All will happen at the End, the day of the Lord, the day of judgement — The End came with the Incarnation and goes on coming in the Church, till the consummation. Hence the importance of "The Hymnic Passages" (ch 7) — In ch 8 "Conflict and Armageddon" a general view is given of the spiritual warfare in Revelation. In this context a note is added about the "Millennium", completing the brief allusion made to it earlier (pp 18-20). The Millennium must be understood in the same perspective as all the rest, not as a reference to any particular period in the Church's life — "The Final Separation" (ch 9) is marked by a 'new heaven and a new earth'. Here the author has a long consideration on "the meaning of heaven" (pp 134-138) emphasizing that the OT "transcendent 'out there and wholly other' view of God is not allowed to remain unqualified" (p 36) Christ now is at the right hand of the Father in heaven, where he went to prepare a place for us. This fact implies that our final destiny is not to be separated from the physical universe. Jesus has taken his own body to heaven "in that is bound up the redemption and renewal of the physical universe" (p 138) — The reality of the "new heaven and the new earth" is known to us only by faith, we have no thought forms nor language to comprehend it. "John with the genius of divine inspiration composes a mosaic of Old Testament images in order to convey the ultimate reality" (p 146) In faith the Christian is "living in hope for the future" (ch. 10).

The volume is the outcome of the author's "own attempts to expound the essential contemporary message of Revelation in three separate Bible groups and in a series of public lectures at a Bible College" (p 9) during several years. The summary given above, is but a rough outline of the main ideas developed in the book. The author's main thesis is that in the message of Revelation Christ is portrayed as the one who ordains the course of history towards God's ultimate goal. I feel that some references to details of the apocalyptic visions might have usefully illustrated the author's arguments. Several times the reader is warned not to look at the succession of visions as a chronological succession of events. According to his excellent remarks on p 109, in my view the author's perspective would gain in presenting a less jejune sketch of the structure of Revelation than the one given on p 57 (seven successive groups of sevens). A look at the concentric structure of the Book, would bring out how each section (an introductory vision, a vision of the godless and their end, a vision of the martyrs and their end, and a concluding canticle) is repeated by the next one, not succeeded, at the same time how visions of the godless diminish while the visions of the martyrs increase as the sections follow one another. — Each chapter concludes with a summary. There is an Index of subjects and names, and an index of biblical references — The cover design may look as clear as some of John's apocalyptic visions.

J VOLCKAERT, S.J.

Relaunching the Indian Liturgy— Some Reflections on our Experiments

M. AMALADOSS, S J.

THE movement towards an Indian liturgy came to a stand-still some years ago for various reasons, which we need not go into here. This may be the time to reflect back on the past in order to learn a few useful lessons for the future. What was done ten years ago was done "experimentally". We have had a sufficient amount of experience on which to reflect. I am not attempting here a survey, much less an evaluation, of the whole experiment and its impact on the people Mine is one man's contribution to a review of a limited field, namely, AN ORDER OF THE MASS FOR INDIA — I. This includes the famous Twelve Points, The Order of the Mass in which these were integrated, and the Indian Eucharistic Prayer. I intend only to advert to certain elements that have provoked my reflection over the years and, as a result of this reflection, suggest a few principles that might help us in going ahead with our task of creating an Indian liturgy. At a time when the movement itself was attacked and the very principles of inculturation were questioned, we were understandably defensive. I think it is time now to be constructively critical, precisely in keeping with the spirit of experimentation

Shall We Stand or Sit?

Let me start with something very external· posture. It is probably taken for granted today that an Indian Eucharist is celebrated sitting cross-legged on the floor (or on a platform). This is only interrupted a couple of times for *pañcāṅga* or *sāstāṅga praṇāmas*, which however are easily omitted. About fifteen years ago I remember writing a note to the liturgical commission suggesting that while sitting is a suitable posture for reposeful recollection, meditation and prayer, standing may be more appropriate for praise and worship, even according to the Indian (and oriental) tradition. Kneeling is not oriental at all. Sitting is a restful posture favorable to concentration and *dhyāna*. When worship itself is considered to be a process of growing integration and interiori-

sation, not only of the subject worshipping but also of the object worshipped, sitting — in *padmāsana* or other similar postures, not lounging in various ways, in or out of chairs of all kinds — is certainly a suitable posture. But when the object is exteriorised, as for example in the temple, if not for the other preparatory *upacāras*, at least for the *camphor ārati*, the devotee stands and often follows it up with a *sāṣṭāṅga praṇāma*. The postures for worship in India constitute a spectrum, from sitting to standing, dancing, walking round, bowing, *pañcaṅga praṇāma* and *sāṣṭāṅga praṇāma*, each one suited to a different situation and mood.

The basic question however is not an academic study of postures in India, but what we are experiencing or doing in the Eucharist and what is the posture appropriate to the experience or action. There are certainly various actions in the Eucharist: gathering together, procession, listening, meditation, concentration and interiorisation, praise and thanks, worship, sharing food, celebration. A simple posture is certainly incapable of expressing all these various moods and moments. Just as an example, I can think of the following movement: 1. As the people gather, they greet each other and settle down in a free, non hieratic moment. 2. Every one sits quietly and listens to the readings and the homily. 3. There may be a procession at the offertory, at least on solemn occasions. 4. All stand for the great prayer of praise, thanksgiving and worship. 5 There could be a moment of singing and dancing after the doxology. 6 Sharing the Eucharistic meal in an appropriate way. 7. A quiet moment, sitting, for a *bhajan* leading to interiorisation. 8 Dispersal. In this manner there is activity, movement, variety, participation, togetherness.

When sitting was adopted as the almost only posture of the Indian order of the Eucharist, I came to terms with it for two reasons: sitting favours a contemplative experience, which I considered at that time as something characteristically Indian, secondly the Eucharist is the symbolic action of a meal. I will wonder aloud in the next section, whether the Eucharist is the proper occasion for the promotion of an exclusively contemplative mood. Here I shall point out that though the Eucharist is basically a symbolic meal it does integrate within it moments of meditation and worship. The great *ārati* at the doxology concluding the Eucharistic prayer and the suggested *pañcāṅga* or *sāṣṭāṅga praṇāma* following it, recognize this moment of worship. I am only wondering whether this moment must not embrace the whole movement of the Eucharistic prayer, reaching its summit in the doxology.

Liberation or Contemplation?

The most common reaction after a celebration of the Eucharist according to the Indian order is "Oh ! How prayerful ! How contemplative ! Prayer and contemplation are certainly values worth promoting But is that the main atmosphere that must surround an Eucharistic celebration ? The Eucharist is a celebration of the com munity of sharing and fellowship of the commitment to build up the community and to struggle against all that keeps the community divided, of one s self gift to undertake this task prophetically in the world, of integrating all this in the paschal mystery of Christ s death and resurrec tion which is made present in memorial In the context of the prevail ing poverty injustice oppression communal divisions etc the Eucharist becomes a commemoration of and a call to an integral and total liberation of people Even if these *ideas* are evoked during the cele bration I think that the Order of the Eucharist itself overly emphasizes the vertical dimension of worship Apart from the traditional Catholic stress on the sacrificial aspect of the Eucharist the model from which elements are drawn in Indianizing the rite is that of the *Pūja* with its various *upacaras* I shall come back to these *upacaras* in the next section Here I only point out that elements from the scheme of *upacaras* recur at least seven times in the Indian Order the welcoming of the celebrant the lighting of the lamp the cleansing from sin the honouring of the Word in the Bible the offertory the doxology and the *manasa pūja* after communion Add to this the elaborate cleansing ritual in the b ginning the interiorizing *bhajan* after communion and the restful meditative posture of sitting throughout and one cannot escape the pow rful ritualization of the vertical dimension The ritual structure off rs no opportunities of introducing any other type of symbolic action

It is true that through the readings the homily and the prayers other themes can be intr oduced But in the ritual as it is at present the only action that everyone does together is singing Even the sharing of the food is verticalised since every one has to walk up to a priest or minister So any themes one might introduce may tend to remain at an intellec tual level There is then a real need to make the ritual action more re levant to people who are in the world involved in various struggles for an integral liberation of people The ritual action must itself be a symbolic affirmation of the community that trancends and challenges the divisions brought about by economic injustices communalisms of various types and political power relationships

Another obstacle to any serious stress on the community dimension is the feeling that the Indian Order is even more celebrant-centred than the Latin one. The priest is more than the unifying leader of the group, specially ordained for that purpose; he is the *guru*, the master; consider the elaborate rituals of welcome and *śuddhi* (purification), the blessings on readers, the *mānasa pūjā*, etc.

The net result of all this may be a "ritual" atmosphere in which contemporary young people may feel uninvolved, vaguely uneasy as before something perceived as esoteric and therefore alienating, not relevant to the actual problems of the people.

Mixing Messages?

I mentioned above that what gives an Indian flavour to the Indian Order of the Mass is the *upacāra* ritual *Upacāras* belong to the *pūjā* tradition. The deity is made present in some visible form, e.g. in an image. The deity is then treated as one would treat an honoured guest: offer water for washing, a new dress, a seat, a garland; wave incense and light as signs of honour; offer food. An elaborate procedure would include 16, a short one 5 *upacāras* Only a few of the *upacāras* have been integrated: water flower, incense, light, food. But they come in various combinations on various occasions. Their repetition tends to add to the "ritual".

The use of these elements as integral parts of gestures of honour is no problem and they are used in India even in secular contexts, even today. But the contexts of their use can still be a problem. While the Indian Order of the Mass was being elaborated there was a strong sentiment that Jesus Christ who becomes present in the Eucharist must never be made the object of these *upacāras* One could think of them very well as part of a "Benediction" service. One hesitated to highlight too much the presence of Christ as an object of worship within the context of the Eucharist But this is what is done in the *mānasa pūjā* after communion. In that place we have a mixed-up symbol: one is making visible gestures of honour to some one who is not in any way objectified but is in the heart ! If one is keen on honouring Christ present it is much more appropriate to do so after the doxology and before communion, as it is done in Aikya Alayam. The *mānasa pūjā* must remain interior, not externalised

In the Eucharist our worship is offered to the Father, with Christ, in the Spirit. Yet the two places in which this worship is symbolically expressed there is a lot of symbolic confusion. At the offertory, gifts

are brought to the altar and food, flowers and incence are specially used in a series of *upacāras* to symbolize our offering. Yet when the flowers are offered by being placed in eight directions the solemn invocations are in praise of Jesus Christ through whom the gifts are offered. We theologians are good at offering elaborate explanations. But this sudden litany to Jesus Christ does break the rhythm and unity of the rite of offering to the Father — especially when these invocations alone are chanted by the celebrant and repeated by all in Sanskrit.

Similarly, at the doxology at the end of the Eucharistic prayer, the celebrant is lifting the consecrated bread and wine while some from the congregation are throwing flowers, and waving incense and burning camphor. Then there normally should be a *pañcānga* or *sāṣṭānga praṇāma*. To whom are these *upacāras* directed ? The doxology clearly indicates the Father. And yet, I would not be surprised if most of the people experience this as an act of worship of Christ present in the bread and wine, whom the celebrant is holding up If this is true, then we have introduced a symbolic ambiguity at the centre of the Eucharistic ritual I have sometimes tried to avoid this by waving also the consecreated bread and wine during the doxology The ritual at this moment not only needs to be explained but re-structured so that no misunderstanding is possible That this ambiguity may be in the Latin rite itself — with the server offering incense — is no excuse.

Prayer or Theological Discourse ?

The most controversial part of the Indian Order of the Mass has been the Indian Eucharistic Prayer Let me first affirm that I am in favour of producing such prayers The Italian Missal has six of them besides the four Roman ones. Let me also say that I am not interested in the controversy that has surrounded the Indian Eucharistic Prayer However, there is no reason why we should allow the stalemate to continue. That Eucharistic Prayer has certainly the merit of being the first one composed in India It does not mean that it is the best we could write. It is time that we left aside that controversial prayer and composed new and better ones But before doing so it may be worth our while to take one last look at it and to perceive globally its strengths and weaknesses

The element I appreciate most about its form is its dialogical structure with frequent responses from the people. In an Indian language, in verse form, the whole prayer could be sung With regard to its content, its highlighting of the History of Salvation is interesting. The fourth cannon of the Latin rite does it more briefly. The Indian

prayer of course makes explicit references to the Indian tradition. My third appreciation is for the words and phrases that add an Indian flavour to the text. On the negative side, it seems more like a theological discourse than a prayer, highlighting of course a theology of other religions. It lacks spontaneity; the elaborate foot-notes add to the impression that it is too contrived. India has a rich tradition of hymns and stotras with an abundance of symbolic language. This symbolic tradition could help make future prayers less "rational" and more inspiring. For the themes we could turn our eyes more to the Indian people of the present and the future with their struggles and hopes rather than to a glorious past. This would be an important and essential element in making the Indian Order of the Mass contemporary and relevant. So I venture to suggest that we should start again composing new Eucharistic Prayers, one or more, in each regional language. We could make them more rooted, more creative, more inspiring and more challenging.

Action and Symbol

As I had said in the beginning, the purpose of the foregoing critical remarks was to lead to the spelling out of some guidelines for future action in the field of liturgical inculturation

The liturgy may be described briefly as the symbolic action of the community The community lives and celebrates significant moments in its ongoing life — the birth or death of a member, marriage, the experienced togetherness of the community itself. In and through this action-celebration it symbolizes and makes present the paschal mystery that is its very being and life. The key element is therefore the community action. For example in the Eucharist it is eating and drinking together in memory of Jesus. That action itself symbolically makes present (real) the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus. These are two dimensions of one and the same action. At the symbolic level while the basic symbols contribute to the central action of the community, some help to indicate its further transcendent significance. In the Eucharist the basic action is the bringing of focd and drink, a prayer of blessing over them and sharing them. The transcendent dimension is spelt out basically in the prayers, strengthened by gestures like the *āratis* at the doxology.

The effort at inculturating the Eucharist therefore must start not with its theological meanings and the best way of re-symbolizing those meanings in the Indian context, but with *the community action* of sharing food in memory of Jesus and with the ways of making that action

meaningul in today's context for our people in India. Once this basic action is clearly laid out in its ritual form, then other symbolic elements and gestures that only further illustrate the deeper mysteric meaning could be sparingly added in such a way that the basic ritual action is not obscured.

For example, if we take Baptism, the basic rite is the bathing in water accompanied by a profession of Trinitarian faith. The meaning of this rite is further illustrated and elaborated in accompanying rituals like post-baptismal anointing, lighting of the candle, giving the white dress, etc. In elaborating the Indian Order of the Mass without any efforts to contextualise the central action and make it significant for the community, we have worked on the decorative and the illustrative. Perhaps the Indian atmosphere that we have succeeded in creating through these rituals has not only not highlighted the basic action but may have obscured it. This is obviously not intentional. But ritually and from the point of view of communication, the changes introduced are new, more striking and elaborate, and attract more attention than the altogether untouched basic ritual action of the community.

I may advert, in passing, to two further temptations to "ritualism" that we must resist if we have to highlight the community action. The first operates in the following way. In the course of one's experience or study one comes across a beautiful rite or symbol and then one looks around for an appropriate place where this can be fitted in. The result may sometimes be happy, sometimes out of place and at other times help to turn the attention away from the main action. Going through my comments on the *upacāras* in the foregoing section one can find examples of all three. The second temptation is the introduction of superfluous decorative rites. For example the Indian Order proposes some mūdras or hand-gestures. Certainly hand gestures are used in iconography and dance to indicate that the person imaged is doing a particular action. Thus a Buddha with his hands in *abhayamūdra* is granting protection. He may be represented as preaching in another image with an *upadeśa mūdra*. But when a priest is actually giving a homily it seems needless for him to be holding his hand with an *upadesa mūdra* — apart from the fact that it makes the atmosphere hieratic and renders the communication less spontaneous and lively.

A Constructive Suggestion

Let me make a positive proposal so that my preceding remarks may not seem only critical and not constructive. Though more radical suggestions could be made, I shall for the moment stay within the limits

of the present outline of the Indian Order, well within the "twelve points". The reasons for the changes proposed will be evident, I hope, from the critical reflections I have made above.

The community comes together for the Eucharistic celebration, while a devotional atmosphere is being created by a *bhajan* (or instrumental muscic). The celebrant(s) joins the group quietly: he could even be one of the first to arrive and start the *bhajan*. When the whole community has gathered, the celebrant greets the assembly, introduces the celebration and invites it to repentance. A brief *bhajan* follows and is concluded with an absolution by the celebrant and with symbolic sprinkling with water. The community then wish each other peace. The lamp is lit with an invocation. The Scriptures are honoured with a simple garland and are proclaimed. After the homily the community responds through an appropriate song, *bhajan* or psalm. This part of the liturgy takes place round a low altar on which the Scriptures could be enthroned. Everyone is sitting crosslegged. Listening, meditating, interiorisation are the attitudes to be emphasised in this section.

After this liturgy of the Word, every one stands up and the celebrant moves to the altar of the Eucharist, appropriately high During this movement, representatives of the community bring forward symbolic and other gifts including the bread and wine The symbolic gifts are: a brass-pot full of water (*pūrṇa-kumbhana*, symbolising fulness); 8 flowers on a plate placed in eight directions (the *pūrṇa-kumbhana* could be placed in the middle of the flowers), incense (or incense sticks); a small oil lamp or camphor (The camphor is lit only during the *ārati*. In the case of an oil lamp, the camphor is also added at the *ārati*). With food (bread and wine) these constitute the *five upacāras* The full pot, the eight flowers in eight directions, the five elements and the food-to-be-shared symbolise collectively and powerfully cosmic integration and wholeness, a central theme of sacrifice in the Indian tradition The gifts are placed on or around the altar by those bringing them, the celebrant placing the bread and wine on the altar. Then he invites the community to pray, intentions are proposed and he concludes with a prayer and continues with the Eucharistic prayer. At the end of the Eucharistic prayer the representatives of the people come forward and pick up the symbolic gifts while the priest picks up the consecrated bread and wine (placed together on a plate). While the doxology is sung the gifts (including the consecrated food and drink) are waved together in *ārati*. Please note that this is the only *ārati* during the celebration The *pañcopacāra* includes the whole movement from the bringing of the gifts to their waving. The community then continues with a song of praise

or Gloria. One could engage a simple dance movement by a representative group during the song of praise.

The service of communion then follows as in the Indian Order. A less "vertical" fashion of sharing the communion could however be envisaged. At least on special occasions the gifts offered could be shared with the poor present (after the celebration). After communion everyone sits down again for *bhajan* leading to interiorisation and silence. A final prayer and blessing conclude the celebration. Processions, not excluding simple dance movements, may also be introduced at the entrance and at the offertory.

The People or the Experts

Authentic inculturation in liturgy, as in other fields, will start from the people and the way they celebrate their life in the light of faith. The experts are certainly needed as guides for their knowledge and analytical powers. But the starting point is the community. The pastors of course have the responsibility of final discernment in communion with the people But there can hardly be any discernment and choice if creative experimentation has not preceded.

In view of the points I wanted to make in this note I do not need to go into the role of tradition, variable and invariable elements in sacramental rites, etc. It was not my intention either to make concrete or detailed proposals regarding future directions of liturgical inculturation. My purpose was to learn a lesson by looking at our experimental past. That lesson has been· *contextualise the basic symbolic action of any given celebration and protect the integrity of its symbolic thrust* This lesson has two points First of all, any celebration that is not relevant to the life of the people will be alienating. This relevance must find expression not only in words and sentiments but in the communal liturgical *action* itself Any ritual scheme must remain open to creative intrusions of the living reality Secondly we must be more attentive to the *symbolic integrity* of the liturgical action, avoiding mere ritualism on the one hand and mixed-up messages on the other. I hope this lesson will further encourage us in the path of authentic and relevant inculturation of the liturgy

In the foregoing pages some of my comments concerned the symbol-structure of some of the rites. These will have to be re-examined in order to make them more internally consistent, meaningful and relevant. Some may even have to be dropped. I have also pointed out that the atmosphere created by the ritual action tends now rather

to contemplation and worship and is less expressive of community and commitment. There may be places (contemplative ashrams) and occasions (a retreat) where such an emphasis may be welcome. But we need a different ritual structure (or structures) to help other people and to meet other needs.

The Eucharist is the centre and summit of the liturgy. For that very reason it is a sensitive area and provokes defensive reactions. Would it not be better to start climbing to the summit from below? We have to give prior and immediate attention to indianizing the "celebration" of birth and initiation, marriage, sickness and death. In a sense these life-situations are closer to the people. Even in secularized areas where people do not seem to feel the need of the Eucharist they still desire to ritualise these events These life-situations are also objects of spontaneous inculturation by the people. We often have, as a matter of fact, a double ritual system operative among them. Integrating the two will be a challenging way of inculturation. It will also be a good preparation for all concerned towards a more authentic liturgical renewal

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Spirituality

Simple Prayer. By John DALRYMPLE, *London, Darton, Longman and Todd* 1984. Pp 118. £ 2 95

Those of us who feel about prayer that we have to begin again from the basics will find Dalrymple's booklet refreshing and inspiring It is not exactly a Do-It-Yourself manual, although it does contain sufficient advice on how to begin contemplative prayer to be helpful to anybody The book is rather a very well done summary of the doctrine on prayer as it moves towards silent contemplation, where striving gives way to receiving as the predominant mood (115) D explains the various aspects involved in this growth, including social commitment. There are a couple of points where I would not quite agree with the author· I do not think that meditation can be said to be knowing *about* God (22) (this could rather apply to theology or philosophy). In the sense given to it by this and most authors, meditation is rather a genuine *knowing God*, even if this knowledge passes through a mental articulation. I find the author somewhat exclusivist in his approach to other forms than Christian prayer, not sufficiently open to the possibility and reality of authentic mystical prayer in other than the denominationally Christian tradition. And perhaps the oriental emptying of the mind which he decries is not so different in essence from the silent prayer to which his own teaching leads I would also feel reluctant to relate the seed of the mystical growth in prayer to the baptismal character as such (i e "the sacramental union with God (which) is in all Christians and persists even through grave sin" 110). It seems to me that such seed is rather to be sought in the life of grace which as the Church teaches, is offered to any person who opens himself or herself to God's love Apart from these few theological points, I think that the book is practically very helpful But the reader should be warned: *simple* does not mean *easy*. "Loving God is never *easy*. It becomes *simpler* the more we try it" (III).

G GISPERT-SAUCH, S. J.

Barclay's Feet of Clay

Christian MIGNON, S.J.

BEING a Bible-translator I am naturally interested in Bible commentaries. About three years ago, while preparing notes for the new Bengali translation of the New Testament, I came across *The Daily Study Bible* Indian series of William Barclay, which had just been brought out by the Theological Publications in India. The book of that series which I happened to consult first was the commentary on the Book of Revelation I liked it at once. How informative and how well-written it was! The biblical world came alive, as it were, under Barclay's pen The divine message was explained pleasantly and convincingly and the meaning of many obtruse passages was brought to light. It was essentially a pastoral commentary, with biblical learning presented in untechnical, limpid language and made inspiring by the obvious faith and devotion of the writer I liked that book on Revelation so much that I ordered a full set of *The Daily Study Bible*.

That was three years ago. In the meanwhile I have become better acquainted with Dr Barclay's biblical series. I still think it is a fine commentary in many ways, but now I also believe that it is dangerous for the Catholic faith of our people That is why I want to write a few words of warning about this. I intend in this article to show with the help of texts taken mostly from Barclay's books on the Gospels that in many important matters his commentary is nothing but a restatement of the Protestant interpretation of these texts and a rejection of ours In conclusion I will say why I feel that this series should not be offered to our people as a guide in the study of the New Testament.

Let us start at the very beginning — the coming of Jesus into this world. Commenting on Luke 1.26-38 Dr Barclay writes. "In this passage we are face to face with one of the great controversial doctrines of the Christian faith — the Virgin Birth. The Church does not insist that we believe in this doctrine" (Book 4, page 12). In a rather slipshod statement of the reasons for accepting or rejecting the Virgin Birth Barclay then makes it clear that he considers Joseph to be "the real father" of Jesus and that the literal sense of Virgin Birth in this

passage[illegible] in Matthew 1:18-25 should be rejected. In Barclay's view this idea of the Virgin Birth is nothing but a crude notion (Book 1, page 23, and elsewhere). As for Mary's conception of Jesus "through the action of the Holy Spirit", Barclay reminds us of the Jewish idea that "no child could ever be born without the Spirit" (B. 4, p. 13). He adds at once that, of course, in the case of Jesus' birth the Holy Spirit "was operative in a unique way". In Book 1, pages 22-23, he tries to show in what way the Holy Spirit was "operative". Instead of saying, as we do, that Jesus was conceived only by the miraculous action of the Holy Spirit, he attributes to the Spirit merely the fact that Jesus "opens our eyes to God's truth, that He is the creating power come among us and the recreating power which can release the souls of men from the death of sin". . As for the brothers and sisters of Jesus mentioned in the Gospel, they were, according to Barclay, not his cousins, but his own younger brothers and sisters, the other sons and daughters of Joseph and Mary (B. 1, p. 41; B. 14, pp. 14-20).

One of the most distressing parts of Barclay's commentary is his treatment of whatever refers to the eucharist. The whole eucharistic discourse of Jesus in St John, chapter 6, is given a merely symbolical meaning. Here Barclay's commentary becomes incredibly unrealistic and far-fetched. When Jesus declares: "I am the bread of life", it only means that, through Jesus, "man enters into a new relationship with God" and so his spiritual hunger is satisfied (B. 5, p. 216-217). "Jesus is the essential for life" (p. 220). When Jesus becomes more explicit and asserts· "If anyone eats of this bread, he will live for ever... The bread which I will give him is my flesh. My flesh is real food, my blood real drink .." Barclay, resolutely rejecting what he calls "crude literalism", explains Jesus' words in this way: "To eat Christ's body is to feed on the thought of his manhood, until our manhood is strengthened and cleansed and irradiated by his" (B. 5, p. 224). To drink his blood is "to take his life into the very centre of our being... the very core of our hearts" (through contemplation and acceptance). The only meaning in which these texts refer to the Lord's supper is expressed by Barclay in this way: "It is as if we were told: If you want life you must come and sit at that table where you eat that broken bread and drink that poured-out wine which somehow, in the grace of God, bring you into contact with the love and life of Jesus Christ". And Barclay adds: "There is no doubt that John is saying that for the true Christian every meal has become a Sacrament" (B. 5, p. 225; B. 2, p. 342).

The commentary on the Last Supper too takes everything symbolically. Here too Barclay warns us against taking the words of

Jesus "with a crude literalism" (B. 9, p. 103). The bread which we eat is ordinary bread, he says, but it is like those photos or letters of the dear ones we lost: we keep them carefully, because though "they are common things, they have a meaning for beyond themselves;" when we see them, they bring back our dear ones. So is that bread to the true Christian: it speaks of Jesus, symbolically it is the very body of Jesus. It is a way to his presence (B. 4, p. 265-266; B. 9, p. 104). When St Paul warns the Corinthians against eating this bread and drinking this wine unworthily "not discerning the Lord's body," he speaks, according to Dr Barclay, of those who fail to realize "what the Sacred Symbols mean", "the love they stand for", or even possibly "who fail to show due reverence to the body of Christ which is the Church" (B. 9, p. 105).

No mention whatsoever is made by Barclay of the eucharistic priestly powers given to the Apostles by Christ, of the power "to do this as a memorial of me" (1 Cor 11. 24-25, Luke 22:19). And this brings us to another one of the more serious omissions and denials of Dr Barclay It is perfectly clear from the way he explains this text and other similar passages that ministerial priesthood, namely priesthood as a sacramental function established by Christ, means nothing to him To give but another example, his explanation of John 20.23 — the text which we Catholics believe to express the gift to the Apostles of the power to forgive sins — is very revealing Commenting on these words of Jesus "If you remit the sins of anyone, they are remitted," he says. "This sentence does not mean that the power to forgive sins was ever entrusted to any man or men, it means that the power to proclaim that forgiveness was so entrusted " The Church has only received the privilege "to convey the message of God's forgiveness to men" (B. 6, p 274) As for the Sacrament of the Sick, Barclay seems to see in it only an exercise by the Church of the gift of physical healing (B 14, pp 129-130) ' Not even the Apostles are ever mentioned as priests in the ministerial sense of the word

This brings us to the very concept of authority in the Church. About the power to loose or to bind given by Jesus to the future leaders of his Church (Mt 18 18), the only commentary Dr Barclay makes is this· "What this saying may well mean is that the relationships which we establish with our fellow-men last not only through time, but into eternity, therefore we must get them right" (B. 2, p 189).

With regard to the famous text of Mt 16:17-19, Dr Barclay states the Catholic interpretation of it in a way which is both seriously incomplete and inaccurate. For a man who professes great respect for truth

this is hardly honest. But what meaning does he give to Jesus' words: "You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church"? The interpretation which is the best according to him is this: "Peter himself is the rock, but in a special sense. He is not the rock on which the Church is founded; that rock is God. Peter is the first stone of the whole Church, because he was the first man to see in Christ the Son of the Living God. In other words Peter was the first member of the Church and in that sense the whole Church is built on him. And in ages to come anyone who makes the same discovery as Peter is another stone added into the edifice of the Church of Christ" (B. 2, p. 141).

As for the keys of the Kingdom which Jesus promises to give to Peter, all that Barclay is willing to concede is that Peter is given the charge of steward of the Kingdom But "in the case of Peter the whole idea is of opening, not shutting the doors of the Kingdcm. And this came abundantly true. At Pentecost Peter opened the door to three thousand souls and later on his intervention made possible the admission of the Gentiles into the Church But it is not only Peter who has the keys of the Kingdom; every Christian has, for it is open to everyone of us to open the door of the Kingdom to some other. ." (B. 2, pp 144-145). The conclusion of this part of the commentary is equally revealing: "Peter had made the great discovery; and Peter was given the great privilege and the great responsibility It is a discovery which everyone must make for himself, and, when he has made it, the same privilege and the same responsibility are laid upon him" (B. 2, p. 146). — The commentary on Jo 21.15-17 is hardly more satisfactory.

About the origin of the bishops in the Church, Barclay is equally disappointing: "If the elder and the bishop were originally the same, how did the bishop become what he did? The answer is simple. Someone to lead would be essential and would inevitably emerge. The more organised the Church became, the more such a figure would be bound to arise. And the elder who stood out as a leader came to be called episkopos, the superintendent of the Church. But it is to be noted that he was simply a leader among equals" (B. 12, p 72). About James, the first bishop of Jerusalem whom he calls "the leader of the Jerusalem Church", he says: "His leadership was not a formal office, it was moral leadership conceded to him because he was an outstanding man" (B. 7, p. 115). About the obedience due to the leaders of the congregation by its members he writes: "A Church is a democracy, but not a democracy run mad. It must give obedience to those whom it has chosen as its guides" (B. 13, p. 200). In other words, the members of the community elect their own religious leaders.

This is certainly not the structure of the Church as Jesus made it. Jesus Himself chose and called his apostles, He appointed them and send them on their mission. He also gave them all spiritual power and authority that go with that mission, making them his own representatives: "He who listens to you, listens to me," He said. "He who rejects you, rejects me." Needless to say, He wanted them to do the same for their own successors and helpers. That is why we see Paul similarly choosing his own companions, entrusting them with special missions and giving them true power and authority to fulfil their tasks. We see him also appointing elders in every Church and telling his representatives Timothy and Titus to do the same in the churches entrusted to them.

Barclay has a deep-seated mistrust of anything like authority, organization, creed, rituals, etc... in the Church. It is not that he rejects all these things, but the importance he is reluctantly willing to give them is unduly restricted. As for the idea that one Christian Church might have rightful claims to being the Church as Christ established it, that idea is completely unacceptable to him. This doubtlessly explains a certain tone of resentment or animosity one notices here and there when he speaks of the Catholic Church. Not surprisingly, Barclay's treatment of the divonce texts and his allusions to the life of vows is quite unsatisfactory from a Catholic point of view.

Another of the objectionable points in Barclay's commentary is the way in which time and again he raises doubts about the miraculous nature of the extraordinary events narrated in the Gospels, and proposes interpretations which do away with miracles. We give a few examples: according to him Jairus' daughter (Mt 9·23-25) and the widow's son at Naim were probably not dead; they were just in a kind of cataleptic coma and if Jesus had not intervened in time to bring them back to consciousness they would have been buried alive (B. 2, p. 345; B. 4, p. 88). He even goes so far as to raise doubts about the historicity of the raising of Lazarus from the dead (B. 6, pp. 100-103).

The catch of fish described by Luke (5:12-15) should not be taken as a miracle. Jesus' keen eye happened to notice a shoal of fishes moving there (B 4, p. 57) The cure of the paralytic (Mt 9:1-8) is "explained" in this way: "That man knew he was a sinner; because he was a sinner he was certain that God was his enemy; because he felt God was his enemy he was paralysed and ill. Once Jesus brought to him the forgiveness of God he knew that God was no longer his enemy, but his friend, and therefore he was cured" (B. 1, p. 328). In other words, no miracle took place; the psychological relief he felt when he knew he was forgiven cured him.

Barclay rejects also the reality of the stilling of the storm (B. 1, p. 318). He raises doubts about the actual fact of Jesus' walking on the raging sea (B. 2, pp. 105-107; B. 5, pp. 208-209). The two multiplications of loaves also are very doubtful miracles in his eyes. He considers that a real multiplication of loaves and fishes "would be very difficult to understand" (B. 2, p. 102) and so he rather suggests either a kind of sacramental meal in which the people present would have been given a small morsel of food, which was enough to bring back their strength, for it nourished their inner souls as well in a sort of communion with Christ; or a kind of moral miracle, in which, conquered by Christ's own generous sharing, all those people brought out the food they had been selfishly hiding so far and shared it with others (B. 2, p. 103; B. 5, 204). Dr Barclay does not see how improbable those explanations are. If they were correct, would not the way the story was told be most artificial ? And would the people have wanted to make Jesus their king ? Would they have gone up to Capernaum in search of Him in the hope of getting another free meal ? Would the words of Jesus on seeing them there really make sense ? Or his words to the disciples later on, when they were worrying because they had forgotten to take bread (Mt 16: 9-10) ?

One of the aspects of Jesus' miraculous interventions on which Barclay persistently throws doubt is that of healing from demon-possession He asserts that the people of those days attributed all illness to the malignant power of demons (B 1, p. 321; B. 2, p. 35). The sick people themselves were convinced that they were possessed and spoke and acted accordingly. They themselves produced all the symptoms of demon possession But if a person under such a delusion was confronted with an exorcist in whom he had confidence, often the delusion was dispelled and a cure resulted (B 2, p. 35).

As far as Jesus is concerned, Barclay asserts that "either he knew no more on this matter than the people of his days, and that is a thing that we can easily accept, for Jesus was not a scientist and did not come to teach science Or he knew perfectly well that he could never cure the man in trouble unless he assumed the reality of the disease. It was real to the man and had to be treated as such, or it could never be cured" (B 3, p. 36). The interpretation Barclay gives of what happened in Gadara is very significant: The men who thought they were possessed felt, he says, as if the demons were asking to be sent into the swine. And all the time they were shouting and shrieking. The whole herd of pigs alarmed by their yells took to flight and jumped into the sea. And "Jesus like a wise healer who understood the psychology

of a mind diseased" used this unexpected event to convince these men that now they were free from possession. And so they were cured, says Barclay (B. 1, pp. 319-323; B. 3, pp. 117-120).

This kind of arbitrary simplification of what happened does away with many details of the story as told by the evangelists — and makes them meaningless. This applies to the commentary of similar events by Barclay. He conveniently ignores those aspects of the events which do not fit in with his opinions. And he conveniently ignores the fact that Jesus gave his apostles specific powers both to heal people from their diseases and to drive out evil spirits (Mt 10:1), that he spoke clearly and repeatedly of his own interventions in this field, and of those of his disciples, as directed against devils, against Satan himself (Mt 12:22-29; Luke 10:17-20). If demons did not exist would he not have spoken and acted differently, he the teacher of spiritual truth ? Should he not have done it, he who came to tell us the way to salvation ?..

And so we see Dr Barclay time and again commenting on Jesus' miracles in a manner which does away with the miraculous character of these events. He seems determined to find a natural explanation for as many of them as he possibly can, though it is perfectly clear that the evangelists themselves narrated them as signs and proofs of Jesus' divine power, of His identity as Christ and Lord. Instead of confirming us in our faith in Jesus, of enlightening us further in our understanding of what He truly is, this makes us merely admire Him for His great gifts of psychological insight, for His kindness and compassion, for His human wisdom and powers of persuasion ! It does away with the inklings of His divine being which He Himself chose to give us

We can therefore ask ourselves a question: Was it wise on the part of a Catholic institution, the Theological Publications in India, to bring out an Indian edition of Barclay ? In the light of all the texts quoted so far — and many more could have been brought up ! — it seems to me clear that it was not. Barclay on many important points holds and propagates views which are directly opposed to the Catholic faith. It is as if, where his own religious convictions are concerned, he were blind to the meaning of the text. Invoking all kinds of subtle arguments he turns and twists to avoid facing the obvious and, as he is a very gifted writer and can marshal even very weak arguments in a persuasive manner, his commentary on those points can be quite misleading for those of his readers who are not alert or learned enough to see that he fails to prove what he asserts. I would even go further and say that because he is such a cultured, spiritual and sincere man, because he is such an intelligent, pleasant and inspiring writer, he gradually creates

an attitude of undiscerning acceptance in the minds of his readers. One feels like trusting his judgement implicitly. And so the readers, without even being aware of it, are likely to make their own Barclay's mistaken opinions and so gradually to lose their true understanding of the Faith.

Barclay reminds me a little of a French biographer of Jesus, Ernest Renan. A long time ago Renan published a "Life of Jesus" that was written in such a clever, captivating language, in such a scintillating French style, that readers failed to notice how erroneous were many of his interpretations of the biblical events — the insidious distortions of truth which were scattered throughout his book Barclay is undoubtedly a better scholar and a deeper thinker than Renan. But he too at times is apt to enter the realm of fanciful speculation. His commentary then becomes very arbitrary. He takes things for granted, asserts without proving, proposes as acceptable all kind of worthless interpretations, hiding the poverty of his argumentation behind cultural considerations, stories, comparisons or quotations which have little to do with the point at stake.

One thing should be mentioned here Barclay himself in his book *Through the Year with William Barclay* acknowledges· "My trouble has always been that there were certain statements of the Creed which I am not prepared to accept and I have always felt that to repeat them as an act of worship was dishonest" (p. 295). Should we accept — or offer to others as a guide in the study of Holy Scripture a man who feels he cannot accept the Christian Creed in its entirety ?.. In this matter the words of St Paul to Timothy seem to me very appropriate: "O Timothy, take great care of the treasure of faith entrusted to you !" Do not allow the pure gold of Christian faith to become tarnished in your hands, preserve it and pass it on to others in its unalloyed pristine purity !

A Comment:

The author has correctly indicated that the commentaries by W. Barclay have a number of major inadequacies However, I judge that his approach in this critique needs to be questioned.

The commentaries are inadequate because in many ways they are dated from a biblical and ecclesial point of view. They do not reflect the understanding of sacramental life, the ecclesial community, ministry, order, and authority which we find today in the writings of leading Christian theologians and exegetes as they interpret the Scriptures. Barclay interprets the Scriptures from within a limited tradition and not from within the ancient and ongoing common tradition.

Barclay works with a presupposition about the miraculous which vitiates much of his exegesis of the miracle narratives in a fundamental way. He is not open to the evidence of the text. The commentaries reflect also a private and pietistic understanding of Christian life which is questioned in many streams of interpretation today. This is probably one of the major weaknesses of the series. Furthermore, the commentaries reflect a culture and Christian tradition and history which are foreign to India, dated and limited. Another major criticism of the series is the lack of scholarly depth in its theological reflections.

Therefore, the commentaries are inadequate for Christians as such, from some critical points of view and considering the progress made today in ecumenism, biblical sciences and Christian theology and spirituality.

The critique of Mignon does not, however, adequately reflect the significance and content of the 1964 Instruction on the Historical Character of the Gospels (ND 240-5) and *Dei Verbum* 19. Like Barclay, he has prejudices of a dogmatic nature with which he reads the biblical text. He at times critiques the commentaries with presuppositions which do not all flow from the common Christian faith and creeds of the great Churches and Tradition, but from a particular theological tradition and praxis which do not in themselves express the meaning of the biblical texts. I grant that Barclay's commentaries do not reflect Catholic and Christian faith However Mignon has a dogmatic preoccupation and is unable to appreciate how some of Barclay's interpretations complement and balance traditional Catholic readings of some texts. Many Catholic biblical scholars would not read the texts as Mignon implies they have to be read

I also note a type of severity which is unfortunate, as Barclay was a deeply committed Christian, though he reflects in his commentaries a particular expression of Christian thought and life and a limited and historically conditioned tradition. The commentaries reflect in very many ways Barclay's deep learning and biblical expertise. Yet, in spite of this vast knowledge, I do find them inadequate for any serious study of the Bible in general and of the Gospels in particular I also wander if the TPI was aware of the serious lacunae found in them The importance of Mignon's critique is not in the question whether the TPI judged correctly in publishing the series, but rather in the fact that he indicates the weakness of this popular series upon which, unfortunately, too many priests and religious depend

P MEAGHER, S J.

Note

Theology of Religions

A Review Article

The first half of this decade has seen quite an explosion of writings on the theology of religions both from theologians in Eastern countries and from those in the Western hemisphere Orbis alone announces about ten recent books on the topic The subject has become of increasing interest all over the world after a few years of direct contact with the various Eastern or Islamic revivalist and missionary movements. Slowly, a typology of various theologies of religions is emerging which calls us to a discernment to see which responds most fully to our faith experience and the revealed Word of God. We give here a short review of eight such books recently sent to us for review.

Alan Race[1] is an Anglican chaplain in the University of Kent, Canterbury His book is very clear and offers the basic simple typology used also by other authors: the exclusivist theology, represented specially by Barth, which cannot accept any saving value in any religion but only in the Word of God revealed to us in Jesus Christ; the inclusivist view represented specially by Rahner and echoed in the Vatican II theology, which accepts a positive function and value of non-Christian religions but under the theological assumption of the universality and finality of Jesus Christ; and finally the pluralist view, expressed by Hick and others, to which Race is himself inclined, which aims at a "Copernican revolution", in the words of Hick, in which the center of the universal saving action is no longer Jesus Christ but God. Christ expresses for the Christian tradition *a model* of God's action in the world, but this is not necessarily an a priori universal model, even if a posteriori one finds the figure of Christ highly inspiring to most people.

After dealing with each of these trends in separate chapters, the author focuses on the central theological problem in the thinking about religions: Christology Race rightly shows that a pluralist theology of religions supposes a non-ontological, action-centered Christology, well removed from the consubstantiality approach of Chalcedon. Its basic Biblical text would be that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself" (2 Cor 5:19) In this view "Jesus gave shape to God's purposes and activity at work everywhere in creation, and to man's, response to the divine will" (146). The last chapter of the book deals, less convincingly, with the question of truth.

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1. **Christians and Religious Pluralism.** Patterns in the Christian Theology of Religions. By Alan RACE. *London, SCM Press*, 1983. Pp. xiv-176. £ 5.95.

The value of the book consists in its clarity and in the fact that it focuses on the real issues. In the earlier part there is a trend, often found also in other writers, to slide from a consideration about Christ to the abstractions "Christianity" or "religion": in these terms, pluralism is clearly the only option. However it is important to go back again and again to the central point of our faith, Jesus Christ. Only from this concrete perspective can whatever answer a Christian gives to the question of pluralism be valid and convincing.

Some presuppositions of the author need questioning. One of them is that historical consciousness necessarily implies a relativization of *all* forms of theology and of faith. In its extreme form this would imply that universal relativism and agnosticism must follow from historical consciousness. Man is unable to ground himself in any absolute truth. Historically conditioned, we may never reach any super-historical truth. This is an epistemology that needs challenging, and which I think is denied by the very biblical meaning of faith, historically incarnate and yet grounded on the solid rock of God himself. Another presupposition is that the "Copernican revolution" from Christ to God solves the problems of dialogue and in fact is demanded by it — as if all partners in modern dialogue agree on God, under whatever name they call him. This would mean that in dialogue we have to lower our beliefs to a minimum common denominator. The problem is that in practice God is as much a questionable dogma as Jesus Christ, and if dialogue with other religions demand a relativization of our belief in Christ, it would demand, at least in the case of Jainism, Buddhism, Samkhya philosophy, not to speak of Marxism or Humanism, that we abandon also the new center of the Copernican revolution, God. I simply think that the presupposition is wrong.

Finally, the Christological model behind pluralism is one of revelation — Christ is the revelation of God, not one of salvation or redemption It is significant that the author focuses on the Incarnation as *the* central Christian belief. Actually it is not The central belief is rather the Paschal Mystery, the death and resurrection of Jesus, and this is quite absent from the book. When speaking of the basic Christian experience, the experience of the risen Lord is never mentioned If we start from this experience, the gnostic model proposed by Hick (and partly, at least, supported by Race) will need a Copernican change.[2]

Knitter's book[3] is similar in scope and probably the most articulate attempt to summarise the various theologies of religions and to advocate the need of a theological basis for authentic inter-religious dialogue. Although it presents a well-documented and ordered account of the various positions in the field, the book is clearly a partisan plea for a

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2 I may add that the paperback edition of the book fell into pieces in my hands before I finished reading it I hope there is a hard-bound edition which I can recommend to fellow theologians and librarians, and to others interested in the topic.

3 **No Other Name ?** A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes Towards World Religions. By Paul F. KNITTER, *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis*, 1985. Pp. xvi-288. $ 14.95.

theocentric and pluralistic theology. The major presuppositions of the author are again that the new historical consciousness in our culture does away with the classicist mentality of the past. According to him, we must affirm that "no historical manifestation of the Absolute can be absolute!" (26). Therefore there is "no guaranteed truth" (33). Whoever, therefore, would uphold the finality and normativeness of any one religion cannot but be a classicist, lacking in modern historical consciousness, guilty of not surrendering his personal theological securities at the altar of history or at the more dignified altar of inter-religious dialogue. Absolutism can only be a form of fundamentalism.

Another presupposition affirmed is that "only if, to some degree, others are able to say yes to our Christian beliefs will we ourselves be able freely to affirm them" (46). Insightful as the affirmation is, and in my opinion valuable as an orientation, it seems to me that it needs to be carefully handled unless we want to end up in the rather old and discarded search for a minimum common denominator of all schools which is characteristic of simplistic syncretism.

The first part of the well documented book presents the so-called "popular" rejection of absolutist claims as voiced by people like Troeltsch, Toynbee and Jung The second part presents the theological positions found in the emerging theology of religions, presented in four main models But each model includes theologians of very disparate positions. The first model is the conservative evangelical model (Barth, Fundamentalists, Evangelicals) which rejects the validity of all religions and affirms the need of faith in Christ for salvation. The second, the "mainline Protestant model" (Tillich, Brunner and 3rd world theologians like Newbegin, Neill, Devanandan, M.M Thomas. .) is still much influenced by Barth, but accepts the universal revelatory action of God while reaffirming that salvation comes only in Christ. The third, the so called "Catholic Model" (Vatican II, Rahner, Kung, Buhlmann, Cragg, Taylor, Koyama, Niles and even Process Theology !) accepts a pluralism of mediations of revelation and salvation but sees all somehow or other included in or subsumed into Christ, the supreme norm (not the efficient cause) of salvation The fourth is the theocentric model proposed in recent years by a small number of theologians (Hick, Panikkar, Samartha .) who challenge the normative universality of Christ and see him as *a* mediator of revelation and salvation, while accepting at least the possibility that there may be others like him. One can see that, in spite of the labels used, the models cut across denominations

The third part of the book is a theological plea for the acceptance of the last or theocentric model as the only one capable of undergirding an authentic dialogue Knitter agrees that this model is not in the general consciousness of the churches today (they are mostly operating within the third model), and that it demands a shift in Christology. He accepts the universal significance of Christ, but not any exclusive uniqueness or any uniqueness that would be constitutive of salvation or normative for all In the last page he suggests that a unique significance of Christ in the history of religions may emerge from a dialogue

wherein all "mediators" are studied, but says that this cannot be affirmed a priori. The acceptance of the relativity of all religions does not mean an equality among them. Degrees of acceptability and significance will emerge from the dialogue (a highly unlikely outcome !). Hence Christians must have the courage to profess Christ as *a* channel of grace specially significant for them.

I find in the book a clever marshalling of scriptural and theological arguments to prove a thesis. Knitter recognises that the NT speaks of Christ in an "exclusivist language" but proposes that this is part of the Jewish (apocalyptic) way of thinking, not the essence of the Biblical message. The NT language is confessional, not metaphysical, "caressing language, a love language" (185) not to be interpreted in a dogmatic fashion. Many of his affirmations need to be questioned: the absence of the definite article in the NT expression "Son of God" (185) is not true always; the omission of the word *sōmatikos* ("bodily") in the quotation of Col 1.19 (192) is significant; that the Christian doctrine of creation implies dualism (67) needs much qualification; that for the Catholics the Magisterium rather than the Bible is the final criterion of religious truth (91) is simply either false or bad theology; that truth can never be guaranteed (33) is gratuitously affirmed; the "minority status" is said to explain the NT absolute language (184): a majority status could equally explain it, the affirmation of the necessity of Christ for salvation does not imply theologically the denial of salvation outside Christianity; nor does Liberation Theology deny that the revelation in Christ is normative, even when it asserts that our affirmations about him and about God have to be tested in the field of praxis (163); and to say that holding to one faith with finality and decisiveness is incompatible with an open and fruitful dialogue is contrary to experience. Necessarily the new Christology demanded by the "Theocentric Model" goes along the line of the "myth of the God incarnate", and the ressurrection must be interpreted basically as a conversion experience with the memory of Jesus as a background. In my opinion these views look at salvation too much as a question of individual grace and miss the broad perspective which the Mystery of Christ had for Paul, as indeed for the NT in general, namely God's initiative to create a new heaven and new earth and to recapitulate all things in Him even now. Hence the basic questions are whether this theology represents the authentic Christian experience, and whether to affirm the eschatological character of Christ and his resurrection is really incompatible with historical-consciousness or is it not, rather, its very condition.

While largely disagreeing with the theological position of Knitter (and therefore exposing myself to the charges of Western imperialism, classicist mentality and of gripping my security blanket !), I am grateful to him for the clarity with which he has exposed the various theologies, even when some classifications of authors could be questioned. Above all, I am fully in sympathy with his "dream" of a unitive pluralism which remains the major theological task today:

> Unitive pluralism is a *new* understanding of religious unity and must not be confused with the old, rationalistic idea of "one world religion" in either of its alternate brand names. The new vision of religious unity is not

> *syncretism*, which boils away all the historical differences between religions in order to institutionalize their common core; nor is it *imperialism*, which believes that there is one religion that has the power of purifying and then absorbing all the others. Nor is it a form of lazy tolerance that calls upon all religions to recognise each other's validity and then to ignore each other as they go their own self-satisfied ways. Rather, unitive pluralism is a unity in which each religion, although losing some of its individualism (its separate ego), will intensify its personality (its self-awareness through relationship). Each religion will retain its own uniqueness, but this uniqueness will develop and take on new depths by relating to other religions in mutual dependence (9).

Fr Richard[4] professor at the Weston School of Theology, covers much of the same ground as Race and Knitter, in a shorter space. He studies first the Protestant theologians (Troeltsch, Barth, Pannemberg, Cobb, Ogden, Cantwell Smith, Hick, Robinson). In the second chapter he presents the Roman Catholic positions (Vatican II, Rahner, Panikkar, Kung) The third chapter deals with inclusive and exclusive Christologies, with much space given to process theology Unlike Race he thinks, rightly I believe, that the finality of Jesus Christ is based not on the belief in the Incarnation but on eschatology. He also calls for a non-dogmatic approach to dialogue and a relativization of all historical expressions of our faith For him the eschatology, which is the basis of Christ's finality, is a Jewish concept which cannot be extrapolated. We must interpret it as a specific mode of being in the world, but this does not necessarily imply that it can apply only to Jesus Christ. Although the eschatological dimension of the Christian faith is highlighted, the aspect of salvation is generally ignored.

Ratnasekara[5] presents us with his doctoral work at the Institute Catholique of Paris His stand is clearly "inclusivist". Never for a moment does he show any hesitation about the primary and universal mediatorship of Christ In this he falls in line with Vatican II and the main line Christian theology. He is much influenced by Rahner, although he does not hesitate to criticise some of his expressions. The thesis is somewhat heterogeneous The first part analyses Vatican II teaching on religions This is followed by a chapter, summarised from the original thesis, dedicated to the phenomenological (and historical) study of religion in which he emphasizes the need for theology to take such studies into account. The second part of the book begins with a systematic account of the recent authors and main trends in the theology of religions The second chapter is the core of the thesis He proposes five theological principles which have to be taken into account in any authentic theology of religions: the anthropological dimension (which includes both transcendental anthropology and the a posteriori study of religions) and the Christological, the ecclesiological, the missiological and the pneumatological dimensions. Each of these is elaborated at length. The third part of the book is a reflection on the Church of Sri Lanka and the way a true theology of religions could inspire deeper in-

4 **What Are They Saying About Christ and World Religions ?** By Lucien RICHARD, O M I *New York/Ramsay, Paulist Press*, 1981 Pp 87. $ 3 95

5 **Christianity and the World Religions.** A Contribution to the Theology of Religions By Leopold RATNASEKERA, O M I *Kandy, National Seminary*, 1982. Pp xx-247 $ 8 00

culturation and a wider dialogue. Here some elementary notions of Buddhism are explained, undoubtedly for the benefit of the foreign jury of the thesis.

The book reveals a conscientious and solid study. It shows evidence of a very wide reading in all European languages. The author tries to give the insights of all authors, right or left, while proposing a sort of middle path synthesis. At times one gets the impression of a *tour de force*, with the resulting synthesis being none too clear. The book lacks the benefit of a good literary editor who could have trimmed much unnecessary material, translated the foreign language quotations, polished the style and, above all, the exasperating punctuation. We hope that the author will continue to apply his mind to this very important issue and will give us in the future his own balanced and insightful theology of religions, unencumbered by the views of others.

Coward[6] studies the problem from a new perspective. He analyses the attitudes of each of the five major world religions to other faiths The five religions studied are Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism The book ends with a reflection on religious pluralism and the future of religion Like Race, Knitter and Richards, Coward sees that from the Christian point of view the issue of religions is Christological· "Until the doctrine of the uniqueness of Jesus is examined and reinterpreted in relation to the claims to truth by other religions, the changed ecclesiology will lack a firm foundation — and thus will have little meaning" (15) This is indeed the crux of the matter It is a pity that too often he, like other authors, slides from the problem of the place of Christ to the derivative question of the place of Christianity, where it is easier to fight the windmills. From a Christian theological stand point the issue must be kept there, on the person and work of Jesus Islam, certainly, and other religions perhaps also, will have similar absolute points of reference from within their own faith perceptions

Coward is aware that the Copernican revolution from Christ to God is unhelpful for dialogue with Buddhists (and Jains !) who will not find a theocentric universe more congenial than a Christocentric worldview. The "Copernican revolution" is therefore not a solution to the problems of dialogue One is led to question the presupposition that dialogue demands a platform of truths previously agreed upon. What dialogue really demands is a commitment to Truth by each of the participants, and a respect in all for the beliefs of the others, whether one can accept them as Truth or not. If such respect is missing no dialogue is possible. If Truth is not acknowledged as demanding the primary allegiance of human beings, then no dialogue is sought Total scepticism regarding Truth is a renunciation of any meaningful intercourse. Relativising Truth is not the way to a meaningful dialogue.

6 **Pluralism. Challenge to World Religions.** By Harold COWARD. *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis,* 1985. Pp vii-131 $ 8 95

For Coward the six key presupposition of religious dialogue are:

> (1) that in all religions there is experience of a reality that transcends human conception; (2) that reality is conceived in a plurality of ways both within each religion and among all religions and that the recognition of plurality is necessary both to safeguard religious freedom and to respect human limitations; (3) that the pluralistic forms of religion are instrumental in function; (4) that due to our finite limitations and our simultaneous need for commitment to a particular experience of transcendent reality, our particular experience, though limited, will function in an absolute sense as the validating criterion for our own personal religious experience; (5) that the Buddha's teaching of critical tolerance and moral compassion always must be observed; and (6) that through self-critical dialogue we must penetrate further into our own particular experience of transcendent reality (and possibly into the transcendent reality of others) (105-6).

While in some sense I agree with these presuppositions, still I would inquire into the meaning of the fourth. Does it mean that on my past dialogue may start with a profession of faith that "Jesus is my Saviour", but cannot include the equally Christian confession that "Jesus is the Saviour of the world" ? While recognising that my partners will not share my belief, I submit that it is possible to profess this creed and yet enter into a sincere dialogue, provided my creed remains always under the overarching authority of Truth.

Coward tackles the important point of the theologies of pluralism in various religions My impression is that he is less at home with Eastern religions where he depends too exclusively on secondary sources and gives much material that has little connection with the point of pluralism. His expressions are not always accurate. For example on p. 70 he asserts that "many of them (the bhakti saints and prophets) were converts from Islam", and refers for that to Carpenter's testimony. What Carpenter actually says in the place cited is: "Many of them were Brahmanas, others were Mahommedan converts, a few were women". On p. 107 the following sentence makes no sense to me: "Fulfilling this prerequisite (of accurate information) is probably the single largest obstacle to the success of religious dialogue" (*sic*). On p. 17 he affirms: "Both of these (NT) concepts (i.e. incarnation and realised eschatology) are seen by contemporary Christian theologians as obstacles to Christian openness to other religions." By whom, exactly ? Perhaps by Hick ? Are Samartha, Rahner or Panikkar included ? Must W. Cantwell Smith be given special authority because he spent five years teaching in India (1941-5) (30) ? The almost total ignorance of what theologians of India, Protestant or Catholic, said about religions even before Vatican II is shared by Coward with many of the present writers on the theology of religions. This shows how limited in scope the Western academic world tends to be.

In short, although the focus of the book is new and useful in so far as it studies each religion's attitudes to the others, the scholarship behind it is in my opinion, limited and the theological perspectives presented at least questionable.

Partners in Dialogue[7] offers us an English translation of three booklets by a veteran Dutch missiologist, the Capuchin Fr Camps who taught in Pakistan in the late fifties. The three booklets are organised as three parts of a book around the concept of dialogue. The first part deals really with the theology of religions. The author thinks that a dialogue of religious people is not authentic, not really interreligious, unless it touches the question of salvation, i.e. unless it concerns itself with the theological understanding of salvation in one's religion and in relation to the other's religion The section deals also with the various movements and meetings of religions from the Parliament of Religions down to the World Conference of Religion for Peace and the Temple of Understanding, and the theologies of religions in recent times. I think that here the author is somewhat one sided in his choice of the Protestant views on the subject.

The second part deals with inter-religious dialogue or understanding, i.e. with what are the characteristic stresses of each religion and their openness to a dialogue with Christianity The "religions" studied are Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, the New Japanese Religions, Bantu Religiosity, Latin American Popular Religion, and Mao's thought. The treatment is necessarily somewhat selective and skimpy

The third part of the book deals with the theology of the local church "from bottom up", as the author puts it, and the possibilities this approach offers for the discovery of new dimensions of Christianity in ecclesial structures (specially basic communities), new ministries, new liturgies, various theologies, and social programmes. Numerous examples are given from various parts of the world. On the Indian liturgy the author says:

> My fragmentary description of the "Indian" Mass can hardly replace actual attendance at it But I hope readers can now see a bit more clearly why it represents a valid step towards an authentic liturgy that is fully at home in the Indian cultural world I am convinced that such forms of liturgy do have a future in India and that opposition to them will eventually fade away This Indian Mass is a reality, and it will perdure It is also clear, however, that India urgently needs a theology of the local Church if it is to keep moving along the pathway it has entered (199).

The author then suggests that a direct contact between the Indian and the Zairian Church in respect to an inculturation of the liturgy (Zaire has gone a long way in this) could lead to a solution to the problems encountered in India

The book of Camps is the fruit of many years of reaearch, reading and collection of data It is rich in bibliography, in English, Dutch and German At times it becomes a collection of commentated summaries of articles and books read in the course of the years. Although the author has had direct experiences of inter-religious dialogue and of the life of the Church in many countries, still the impression is that he relies mostly on written material For example,

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7 **Partners in Dialogue** Christianity and Other World Religions By Arnulf CAMPS. *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis,* 1983 Pp viii-264 $ 10 95

the question of the ministries in Asia is presented by summarising the resolutions and papers of the Bangalore and the Hong Kong meetings on the subject !

The information given is rich and concrete. Perhaps too many topics are treated and therefore none of them in depth. The theology of religions, in which the fellow Dutch theologian Schoonenberg is presented as the most enlightened on the subject, is somewhat disappointing. Although the book warns against any ethnocentrism in the dialogue of religions one cannot help sensing that in these pages it is always the Christian who reacts to other religions. One has no impression of a true *epoche*. The old argument connecting Indian poverty to its religion is used or suggested a couple of times without a serious discussion. The book is basically European in outlook without much input from Indian theology, yet valuable as a collection of information.

It is a pleasure to present here the work of an Indian Patrologist — *rara avis* ! — Fr Chrys Saldanha,[8] systematic and competent. In separate chapters the book studies three of the earliest Fathers of the Church, (i e St Justin, St Irenaeus and St Clement of Alexandria), and what they had to say about Greek (and implicitly other) religion and philosophy from the perspective of their faith in Christ. The author is not only well informed about what has been published on these writers in most European languages, but equally competent in the modern trends in the theology of religions. Therefore he is able to compare the ancient perspectives and positions with present day issues. This is particularly evident in the last chapter of the book, "Divine Pedagogy", where he gives us a synthesis of what he has found. The Fathers of the Church, he shows, have a totally Christocentric attitude and there is no trace of any liberal pluralism even in the most open of them. The newness and the unicity of Christ was a basic datum of their faith and their theology. It is interesting to note that such faith in the uniqueness of Christ exists already at a time when Christianity is culturally inferior and politically very weak in the surrounding Greco-Roman culture. This faith is, moreover, found among authors who had little ethnic contact with the Jewish race But in spite of this faith in the uniqueness of Christ, the early Fathers are able to make place for Greek philosophy (more than Greek religion) and, of course, for the Old Testament. In the theological spectrum of today, they would be closer to a Durrwell than to either a Danielou or a Rahner, and quite distant from either Barth or Hick. Their view of the relation of Greek wisdom to the Christian faith is one of "pedagogy"[9]. Saldanha shows clearly, against even such a Patrologist as Orbe, that the Patristic universal revelation through the *logos* should not be interpreted in the

8 **Divine Pedagogy.** A Patristic View of Non-Christian Religions. By Chrys SALDANHA *Las, Pzza Ateneo Salesiano* 1, 00139 *Roma* 1984 Pp. 192. 20.000. It is sad to learn that Fr Saldanha has been diverted from the field of Patristics to the field of administration within the order !

9. This relation bears comparison with Sankara's own view of the relation of *sādhanacatustaya* ("the quartet of discipline") to the illuminative knowledge in Vedanta. The comparison is mine, not Saldanha's.

line of the "natural revelation" of later scholasticism or of Vatican I, viz. the philosophical knowledge of God by reason. For the Fathers it was a real supernatural revelation by the divine Word. How that revelation relates to the revelation in the Incarnate Word is an area wherein many of the expressions and comparisons of the Fathers, so often ignored, may help today's theologians. We welcome this very competent study, and congratulate the press for the beautiful printing (with very few errors) and for placing the notes where God created them to be, at the foot of the page, to the great convenience of the reader.

Our last presentation is the booklet of Fr Crowe, a Lonergan scholar[10]. It contains an address delivered late last year at Toronto's Regis College, on Lonergan's contribution to the theology of religions. The basic insight is that in our thinking we must invert the order of the divine missions: the mission of the Spirit must be seen as prior to the mission of the Son, and the latter must be seen "not in opposition but in unity, not in subordination but in complementarity" with the wider and more universal mission of the Spirit. How this complementarity has to be understood is not made clear in the lecture, which contains, however, a promising theological perspective.

G GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

10. **Son of God, Holy Spirit and World Religions.** The Contribution of Bernard Lonergan to the Wider Ecumenism By Frederick E. CROWE, S.J. *Toronto, Regis College*, 1985. Pp 40. N p

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Indian Languages

Nir Ksir. Dharmagranth par ādhārit ādhyātmik vivecan By Thomas DUBAY. Translated into Hindi by Ignatius VELLARINGAT, S J Pp 230 Rs 12

Jivant Prarthna. By Mother M ANGELICA Translated into Hindi by Ignatius VELLARINGAT, S.J Pp 112. Rs 7

Both published by *Satprakashan Sanchar Kendra, Indore*, 1984

The S V D press of Indore offers us two useful translations of books on spirituality at a very reasonable price Both translations are done by the veteran missionary Fr Ignatius Vellaringat The first attractive title gives a slightly shortened version of *Authencity A Biblical Theology of Discernment* The second translates *Living Prayer*. People involved in spiritual formation in North India will be very grateful for these two valuable additions to the scarce Hindi literature on spirituality The two books should be made easily available to all people in the process of spiritual growth whose mother or cultural tongue is Hindi

Avolche Manddier. By Antonio PEREIRA, S J *Goa, Pilar Publications*, 1983. Pp. 167 n p

This is a booklet on Christology in Konkani, printed in Roman script. The book is part of a project of the Pilar Publications to develop a theological literature in the language of Goa. The book is based on good modern authors and is sure to be of use for the development of a Konkani Christian leadership.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

Correspondence

A New Heaven and a New Earth

Dear Editor,

In his article "Faith meets Faith", (VIDYAJYOTI, March '85) M. Amaladoss comes to strange conclusions which smack of syncretism. He writes, "In this manner, Hinduism and Christianity can build together a new heaven and a new earth in India" He visualizes a day in the distant future when both the Catholic Church and Hinduism will wither away to make place for the Kingdom of God. To begin with, the Church is not meant for all men. "God calls all men to participate in his plan for salvation He calls some to the Church. With everyone I am called to build up a new humanity. With those who are called to faith in Jesus I build up a new community of disciples." For this end the Church might have to wither away and disappear. "Just as Jesus died in order to rise to new life I am open to the possibility that the Church is called to die too that the world may live — and this is true of all religions"

He is anxious to conduct a meaningful dialogue with Hinduism in conditions of complete equality between partners. He is well aware that Rahner's theory of anonymous Christians militates against such a dialogue, and has met with violent reactions from some Hindu quarters. Staunch Hindus may as well consider that Christians of good will are anonymous Hindus. But most of us would object being invisibly saved by the unknown mediatorship of Krishna

Still, however much one reduces the importance of the visible Church, she remains the Church of Christ The visible part of the iceberg is a small part, but it is part and parcel of it. Vatican II has accustomed us to think of the Church as the People of God, a very rich and complex notion that includes such meaningful epithets as the Bride of Christ, the Mystical Body of Christ, the Sacrament of the Word. Biblical scholars of the stature of John L Mackenzie, and Pierre Grelot in Dufour's *Dictionary of Biblical Theology* still hold the quasi identity of the Kingdom and the Church In St Matthew's Gospel, Peter is given the keys of the Kingdom, and in St John's, only those reborn of water and the Spirit will enter the Kingdom. But they wrote before the conclusions of Vatican II were published. Nowadays we are more conscious of the fact that men of good will may belong to the Kingdom of God while remaining outside the boundaries of the visible Church In pre-Kung days, when I was a theologian in St Mary's, Father Putz would prudently explain that they belonged invisibly to the visible Church: in those days, the identity of the Kingdom and the Church was a dogma of faith, or almost!

While stretching as wide as he can the distinction between Church and Kingdom, M Amaladoss remains anxious to preserve the universal mediatorship of Christ To avoid offending his Hindu friends by making them into anonymous Christians, he reduces Christ's mediatorship to the cosmic Christ's Well and good, the historical Christ has died and ascended into heaven, but he is still the risen Christ, God and man, whose mediatorship even the Hindu friends of M. Amaladoss cannot escape And if they are saved as we fondly hope they are, they belong invisibly to the mystical Body of Christ, which is to all intents and purposes identical with the Kingdom of God, of which Christ has claimed to be the King

In such conditions, is a meaningful dialogue with non Christian religions still possible ? Proclamation has priority over dialogue Christ has sent us to make disciples of all nations and to baptize them. Which does not mean that we

should condemn non Christians to hell, as St Francis Xavier did, and the missionaries of his time believed. Vatican II has made us more conscious than we were twenty years ago that Hinduism and other non Christian religions have developed authentic religious values under the influence of the Spirit, through which the salvific mediation of Christ reaches them. To discover these values and make people aware of them gives still scope to a meaningful dialogue, no doubt of another kind than the one envisioned by M. Amaladoss. But it remains also that without sacrificing the former, our first duty is to proclaim the Word Neither is it necessary for the Church to wither away, like the State of the Marxists, to build a new Heaven and a new Earth.

St Stephen's Church, Y. DE STEENHAULT, S.J.
Kalyanpur, P.O. Kundurali, W B

Dear Friend,

I was delighted to read Fr Amaladoss's excellent article "Faith Meets Faith", as appeared in your esteemed journal of March, 1985 The frank style of the writer is very helpful, and the article very readable There ought to be more of such open talk from time to time

One or two statements, however, in the said article bother my mind — such as when Fr Amaladoss asserts *"I do not believe any longer that a Hindu, unless he professes faith in Christ, will be damned to hell fire"*.

I have been a regular reader of the VIDYAJYOTI for many years and greatly appreciate its quality and contribution in the matter of dialogue with people of other faiths, in addition to other concerns of the Church But occasionally I have felt disappointment when learned writers in your paper have taken the position that salvation or *moksha* is possible within Vedanta itself, through pursuit of *experience* and the *sannyasa* of the *Jñāna Mārga*, regardless of acceptance or non-acceptance of the Gospel and discipleship of the Master Jesus Christ Some of your learned writers or authors have taken the stand that a good soul like Ramana Maharshi was already united to Christ, and some have claimed to derive authority for such thinking from Vatican II itself.

Without trying to undermine the many good things your magazine is contributing to its readers, I want to suggest that in some of your future issues you owe it to your readers to explain how *moksha* is possible without acceptance of the Good News, or an open confession thereof when the opportunity has been presented Should we encourage the many "secret Christian" disciples in India who decline to come out in the open to receive the sacrament of the Lord ? Is it possible to find *moksha* and union in Christ without confessing the unique Saviourhood of Christ, and believing in other gods like Krishna all the while ?

Is such a position as Fr Amaladoss and certain others feel compelled to take consistent with the apostolic faith, or with the Gospel of St John or the entire New Testament itself ? Are such reservations of faith possible under the "ordination" we have received in the Church of Christ ? Does such teaching support Evangelization in India and strengthen the hands of the Evangelist who seeks to lead people to God through open faith and the sacraments ? Would Evangelists run the risk of *anathema* if they present *"a gospel contrary"* to that which was preached to us by the apostles of Christ (Gal 1 8) ?

Such are the questions which arise in my mind Apart from myself, there are also many Catholics in the land who would want to know your teaching in this matter more clearly

Cordially Yours in Christ,
Rev D. P TITUS
Resident Acharya

Sat Tal Ashram
Bhowali, Dist Nainital, U P.

Dear Editor,

Fr Amaladoss states: "In the field of dialogue with other religions the last twenty years have been a period of growth and discovery. Twenty years ago I studied Hindu religion and culture so that I can present Christ to the Hindus in a way more adapted to their mentality Later I tried to discover the 'unknown Christ of Hinduism' so that I may make the Hindus recognize the Christ I preach to them as their own, but further fulfilling their deeper aspirations. Today I dialogue with my Hindu brothers, looking forward to mutual enrichment and collaboration in the building up of a new humanity"

One begins to wonder whether he wants to say that in the form of dialogue which now appeals to him any interest in making Christ known as the way that leads to union with God has no place any more ?

On this point he is quite definite He bluntly puts the question: "In this context of religious pluralism, is proclaiming Christ as the only Name in which all men find salvation and calling for discipleship through baptism into the Church still meaningful ?" and he implies that it is no longer meaningful

How then does he conceive religious pluralism so that proclaiming Christ remains no longer meaningful ? He explains it as follows "God has a plan for the world He wants to bring together all things in a new heaven and new earth He wishes to unite all men in a community of love, freedom and justice He is revealing and realizing this plan by sharing his own life with men through the Word and the Spirit This self-communication of God is taking place in the world through a great variety of symbolic mediations, but the goal is always the same — the building up of a new humanity in freedom, fellowship and justice. The various religions, and even secular movements, are at the service of this plan of God for the world This is true of Jesus and more particularly of the Church."

Consequently all religions are essentially on the same level. Fr Amaladoss then asks "In the context of this broad vision how do I look at the relationship between religions ?" He answers "The model I find interesting is a group of people called to build a community All of them share this common vocation and are aware of it Each has his or her special talent or charism that he or she places at the service of the community An analogous model is that of the religious congregations and other groups in the Church Each congregation represents a charism that indicates a special type or area of service" From this model it would appear that all religions are on the same level Each one has its own charism, but none can claim superiority over the others The question arises how such a conception is compatible with the faith in Jesus Christ as the one and universal mediator between God and man The religion founded by the Son of God made man cannot possibly be on the same level as other ways of life that are found among men Fr Amaladoss explains his view on Jesus of Nazarath as follows " The mystery of the Word is cosmic, it is there since the beginning of the world and will be till the last day, working in the world in various ways and leading it to fulness and completion The Word becoming flesh in Jesus takes on a limitation in history This manifestation is not the same as the manifestation of the Word in creation or at the end of time I tend to confuse the Jesus of history with the cosmic Christ I use too easily words like final, ultimate, with regard to Jesus (in a sense of realized eschatology) instead of using them about the cosmic Christ in a truly eschatological sense To understand the unique relationship between the cosmic Christ and the Jesus of history may be as difficult as to understand the mystery of the incarnation of the God-man But I need not identify them, much less confuse them"

This statement is rather puzzling Certainly the eternal Word of God was at work in the world before becoming incarnate But how at the end of time there can be a work or manifestation of the eternal Word of God which is not the work of the historical Jesus, who is the Word incarnate, is difficult to see

As the Eternal Word of God and the historical Jesus are one and the same person, the eternal Word of God who is the historical Jesus can act through his divine and through his human nature, but the Eternal Word of God cannot put actions which are not actions of the historical Jesus, and the historical Jesus

cannot put actions which are not actions of the eternal Word. Therefore, to say that the eternal Word of God, here also called the cosmic Christ, can put actions which are final and ultimate and that the historical Christ cannot put such actions, does not make sense. If the Word and the historical Jesus are one and the same person, how can it be said that we need not identify them ? If the historical Jesus is not identical with the eternal Word of God, if they are not one and the same person, then the historical Jesus is not God at all. Only on this assumption that the Jesus of Nazareth is not God, the equal standing of all religions can be maintained, and only on this supposition can one ask whether proclaiming Christ as the only Name in which all men can find salvation is still meaningful.

Dnyanamata Jesuit House,
Sangamner, Ahmednagar Dt

H STAFFNER, S.J

Fr. Amaladoss replies

Thank you very much for communicating to me the letters you received raising some questions with regard to my article "Faith Meets Faith", and for giving me an opportunity to react to them.

1. "Church" is one of the words with a variety of meanings But in the context of dialogue with other religions I prefer to use the word "Church" to mean the visible community of those who profess faith in Christ and are baptized. The word "Church" is also sometimes used to mean the community of all the saved I prefer to refer to this community as the "Kingdom" The two communities are not obviously co-extensive, though they are related through invisible bonds This distinction is not new Card J Ratzinger has recently written "To be able to be the salvation of all, it is not necessary that the Church be identified externally with all Her essence is rather rooted in the following of the One who has taken all of humanity upon His shoulders, her essence consists in being the band of the few by means of whom God desires to save the many The Church is not all, but she exists for all (*Il Novo Popolo de Dio*, p. 387) It will be helpful to clear thinking and discussion if we can use different words to refer to different realities

2 The ways in which God in Christ and the Spirit reaches out to the "few" and the "many" are not the same The "few" confess the Name of Jesus, constitute the Church and proclaim by word and witness the Kingdom The "many" are reached through other mysterious ways, that are not to be assumed from our point of view but to be discerned in dialogue This is God's plan as we (I) experience it

3 The way the "few" fulfil their mission to the "many" is evangelization, which is proclamation of the Kingdom (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 8) The Bishops of Asia have spelt out the triple task of evangelization as dialogue with peoples and cultures leading to the building up of the local church, with other religions and with the poor in their search for development, justice, brotherhood and peace (FABC Plenary Assembly, Taipei, 1974, *Statement* 6-28) This triple task is characterised sometimes as Proclamation, Dialogue and Liberation I do not feel the need to prioritise these tasks in the abstract without reference to a particular situation I do not presume either that the "few" are the sole mediators between God and the "many"

4 While one of the correspondents credits me with an anxiety "to preserve the universal mediatorship of Christ", another thinks that I am denying it To someone for whom the *mystery* of the Incarnation is adequately explained by the unity of the person of the Word, and to whom the humanity of Jesus, the relationship between the two natures, the paschal mystery as a "passing", history and eschatology pose no problems at all, I cannot give a brief answer I can only recommend to his reading the numerous articles and books written in the last ten years on Christology However, one question to reflect on would be. Do we tend to equate the uniqueness of Christ with the uniqueness of the Church ?

5. From the Bombay Seminar on "Salvation in Non-Christian Religions", through the Nagpur one on "Evangelization" and the Bangalore one on "Non-Christian Scriptures" a tradition of reflection on Evangelization and Dialogue has grown up in India, in the context of which I had thought that distinctions like "Church — Kingdom", "Cosmic Christ — Historic Christ" could almost be taken for granted. The point of the article was really the various models to characterise relations between the religions The point of the preferred model was not to proclaim the equality of all religions taken in themselves as systems, but to stress that *all persons are indeed equal before God*, in the mystery of the divine call and human response that constitutes the process of salvation, in the context of a community. That is why I speak of vocation This is the only way I can think of to understand why God has given me the gift of baptismal faith and not to my Hindu brother, who sometimes seems to be closer to Him than myself — if I exclude simple reasons like ineffective proclamation on my part or insincerity on his. The starting point of any dialogue is to respect the dignity, the self-identity, the difference and the mystery of the other person and not instrumentalise him in terms of my own perception.

6. If one does not see the distinction between "Church" and "Kingdom" one would easily get upset to hear that the "Church may be called to die". Yet what was good for Jesus is good for the Church — for us

May I conclude, for the moment, expressing the hope that you would allow me to come back to some of these themes in more detail in a future article.

Devotedly yours,

M AMALADOSS, S J.

The Church

The Family of the Church. By Cormac MURPHY-O'CONNOR *London, Darton Longman and Todd*, 1984 Pp x-114 £ 3 95

This book is a collection of addresses given by Bishop Murphy-O'Connor The author as pastor and teacher is concerned with the two important questions confronting the Catholic Church today, namely, how the Church can become more profoundly the authentic presence of Christ in the world and how the Church of Christ can be the Church in the modern world He tries to find answers to these questions by presenting the family as the best model of the Church The family harmonizes the complementary aspects of different models, such as institution, communion, sign, herald, and servant.

The answer to the first question involves a more profound celebration and practice of liturgy and prayer, a continuous effort to build a sense of community, and a new understanding of what it means to give witness to Christ in the context of one's daily life These goals can be best achieved by the formation of small Christian communities

As answer to the second question the author sees that in future the Church has to be expressed in terms of its relationship with all good human traditions and beliefs Hence the need for ecumenism and dialogue with the other religions is stressed.

The author also deals with topics like youth, politics, freedom, authority, the role of the priest, confession .. Although the ideas expressed by the author are not new, his sincerity, clarity of thought and practical approach to the problems make the book useful.

S FRANCIS, S J.

Book Reviews

Holy Scripture

A Christian Handbook to the Psalms. By R E O WHITE. *Exeter, The Paternoster Press*, 1984 Pp 220 £ 6 95.

The title is both interesting and indicative of the nature of this valuable book. We have Handbooks for Cooking, Motorcycle Repair, Gardening This is a Handbook for the Psalms, the collection of Jewish prayers incorporated into the life of the Christian community from the earliest times The HB is qualified as Christian, reminding us that you could write a Jewish and an Islamic HB

The fact that it is a HB distinguishes it from commentaries and studies of the Psalms and indicates its selective character and practical goal, namely to enable us to use the Psalms The HB's goal is to qualitatively increase the prayerful use of the Psalms Also being a HB we are intended to pick it up as often as we need help This is a Christian HB and so intends to help the Christian to pray the Psalms within his faith tradition However the author does not turn the Psalms into a pious prayer book The Psalms reflect real life, the mature and immature character of a people's religious life

The subject is the Psalms, that ancient collection of prayer experiences which reflect man/woman's naked relationship to God arising from almost every type of human experiences The expression of so many dimensions of human life, at all levels of maturity and immaturity, related to and lived before the face of the living God, is poetic in expression, deeply human and Jewish in character It reflects the lived, actual and honest religious life of generations of Jews The sole aim of the HB is that Christians pray these prayers more deeply and with greater awareness We have hundreds of echoes of an allusion to them in the NT, as the author reminds us by adding a list of NT references at the end of each Psalm

The HB consists of an Introduction in which the author states his aims, discusses general themes found throughout the Psalter, their setting and adaptation in the history of Jewish usage, the poetic characteristics of the Psalms and the meaning of the strange opening titles and closing verses of many psalms Though brief, the treatment of recurring themes and the poetry of the Psalms is rich and very useful The only real gap in the Introduction is the omission of descriptions of the general structure of the various types of Psalms and the failure to discuss the problems faced by many Christians in praying some of the Psalms (see VIDYAJYOTI, Nov 1983 and subsequent issues)

The remainder of the book contains the author's precise, accurate, selective and judicious comments on each Psalm The RSV text is used with constant reference to NEB and other versions The remarks on each Psalm average about a page with cross references to earlier explanations of words, themes and events, there are brief pointed allusions to the similarity with contemporary human experience, summary remarks about the major point of the Psalm, critiques, where apt, of the religious attitudes and maturity reflected in the Psalms, adequate references to similar ideas in other OT texts, and references to important textual and interpretative problems in the text The comments reflect a great familiarity with current scholarship The author avoids taking the side of any one school and chooses intelligently between interpretative opinions

Aware of the rich prayer collections in Indian religious traditions, we would mitigate his emphasis on the uniqueness of the Psalter as expression of man/woman's religious experience

The HB is very good and will help many priests, religious and lay people who use the psalms for prayer Few small books could better help Christians enkindle and enrich their praying of the Psalms in a continuous way Formation personel would find this a most useful small book However, remember this is a HB and not a 2 volume commentary, a book of 220 pages treating 150 psalms Some may be disappointed that

the Psalms are not more Christianized. The author insists that all human experience can be brought before God as it really is experienced.

Patrick MEAGHER, S.J.

Beyond Jesus. Reflections on the Gospels for the B-Cycle By Joseph DONDERS *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books Melbourne, Dove Communication,* 1984 Pp. viii-296 $ 10 95.

Two parallel volumes of 'Reflections on the Gospels', by the same author, viz *The Peace of Jesus* (A-Cycle), and *The Jesus Option* C-Cycle) have been reviewed in VIDYAJYOTI 1984, p 268 The sub-title of the Book indicates that the author does not offer a commentary upon the texts, but ideas or suggestions of what the texts may mean or imply for the life of a particular community, (in this case more directly the Catholic community, students and staff of the University of Nairobi, and guests) In the three volumes the approach is primarily pastoral

In the introduction the author traces a portrait of the attitude of the first disciples For them Jesus was both "the centre of their common lives and the centre of their personal lives" (p 1) Their relationship with the Master "had been very stimulating and enriching", at the same time there was "something rather childish, immature" (p 1) in their attitude This immaturity somehow transpired still in their last meeting with Jesus, as they "remained staring after him when he finally left and disappeared" (p 3) Already before he died Jesus had told them "it is better for you that I go away " If I do not go away you will never look beyond me, *beyond Jesus* (p 3) This last remark explains the title of the book and indicates the particular pastoral reading of the the texts as exposed in the 'reflections' We too in our world should not be "thinking *only* about personal happiness, peace of mind, and being saved, but looking *beyond* all this, faithful to his word and work, his feelings and inspiration, knowing that while we are reaching out to him, in our struggle to establish his kingdom on earth, he is reaching out to us" (p 4)

The style is lively, terse, incisive, thought provoking Each Gospel text has an expressive title giving the main idea which is developed, v g "Six in One" The Gospel text (Jn 1, 35-42) for the second Sunday of the Year, narrates the first contact of Andrew and another disciple with Jesus, and the following day, Peter's first meeting with the Master. The 'reflections' consider the implication of God's calling: Samuel, Paul, John the Baptist ..., six vocations all differing in their situation, but all having in common "their passionate interest in the kingdom of God here on earth" (p 47) — From the exegetical point of view, at times, a more critical approach (which can be without detriment to the pastoral fruit in view) would have been welcome especially taking into account the audience intended. — The typographical presentation in short lines also proves a great help to fix the attention, emphasizing of contrasting thoughts, though the cost of the book is thus inevitably increased.

J. VOLCKAERT, S.J.

My Enemy is My Guest. Jesus and Violence in Luke By J Massyngbaerde FORD, *New York, Orbis Books,* 1984 Pp xiv-178 $ 9 95

This book traces the theme of non-violence, non-resistance and forgiveness throughout Luke's gospel against the political background of Palestine and Syria in the first century CE and more particularly in the period prior to and after the Jewish War (66-74 CE) The author relies heavily on that method of gospel research which studies the particular way each gospel writer used the available sources and composed his gospel for a particular audience within particular circumstances, namely redaction criticism

One of the special characteristics of this study of Luke is the special attention given to the description of the socio-political situation of Palestine in the first century The opening chapter, "The Seething Cauldron of First Century Palestine", describes the Roman occupation, the conflict of classes, the groups of dacoits, the revolutionary movements and groups, the religious fanaticism In each subsequent chapter, while studying actual gospel texts and themes, the author provides the information, from the socio-political world and the world of thought, needed to understand her interpretation of Jesus We find, for example, discussions on tax collection and collectors and the Jewish reaction, the hostile relationship between Jews and Samaritans, the Jubilee Year, and Melchizedek and the Qumran text 11Q Melchizedek

The author judges that the theme of non-violence is a central Lucan theme

and has justified this by her study of certain sections of the Gospel and chosen texts. The Lucan Infancy (ch. 2) is interpreted as evidence of a revolutionary and political type of messianism within certain groups of Christians. In contrast to this understanding of Christ, in the rest of the Gospel Luke presents Jesus so that the infancy narrative and the expectations of John the Baptist are shown as unacceptable and serve as a foil for Luke's own understanding of Jesus The Baptist (studied in ch. 3) is a transitional figure, partially non-violent yet expecting a warrior king Luke's redaction (cf 3:1-4 13) lessens the political character of John and presents Jesus rather as a prophet than the Davidic King. In 4 14-30 Luke presents a totally different Jesus from the expected Saviour of the Infancy and Baptist narratives. The rejection at Nazareth (ch. 4) is essentially occassioned by Jesus' emphatic statement of God's gracious forgiveness to Gentiles and the omission of any intention of vengeance The attempt to kill Jesus at the end of this scene is interpreted as a typical revolutionary or religious zealot reaction

In the following two chapters (4-5) the author studies the texts which narrate Jesus' attitudes and ways of dealing with two groups, tax toll collectors and Samaritans In both cases Jesus stands in direct contradiction to the prevalent attitudes and behaviour, especially of the revolutionary groups and religious fanatics The author sees Luke's portrayal of Jesus in these texts as emphatic statements of non-violence, forgiveness of a socio-political nature, and reconciliation She insists that Jesus' attitude is purposefully described as contrary to the attitudes of the Jews before, during and after the great war (66-74 CE)

A more general chapter (7) on the theme of discipleship and pacifism studies select texts (12 13-21, 13 1-9, 14 1-4, 14.15-24, 14 25-33, 18 1-8) The Lucan Jesus of these texts could be called a pacifist. In a long chapter (8) many aspects of the theme of non-violence are found to be a major redactional concern of Luke in his account of the passion and death of Jesus in comparison with the Marcan and Matthaean narratives

The major ideas and conclusions are briefly and concisely gathered in the final chapter Subject and Scriptual indices with the select bibliography help a ready use of the study The book has been written within the context of the violence, oppression and militarism of the modern world, as the opening line of the Preface indicates ("Nonviolence is the most crucial issue in the Western world today"). To assist the reader or discussion groups to focus on contemporary situations, questions on each chapter are added at the end of the book.

We shall make an appraisal of this book from various points of view. The amount and quality of the evidence offered about the life in 1st century CE Palestine is admirable, and in this respect the book is a major contribution. Within that turbulent world, the behaviour and teaching of Jesus and the Lucan presentation of Jesus, so at odds with many violent movements, hopes and ideologies, stands out with marked distinctiveness The Lucan portrait of Jesus highlights his opposition to violence, his teaching on forgiveness which has social repercussions, his reconciling attitudes, and the marked sensitivity and respect of Jesus for others, whoever they be The author's studies of various texts in the gospels are often quite different from many current interpretations because of her strong emphasis on the socio-political background of Jesus' life and of the life in the community for whom Luke wrote We are forced to go to the text, to examine the historical setting, the author's evidence, and to allow her interpretations to challenge explanations which lack this awareness of the historical situation of Jesus and the Lucan community

However, my serious reservations rise from the following considerations The first is the extent to which the social and political upheaval and the final war in Palestine from 44 to 74 CE affected the Lucan community which I take to be a diaspora community mainly gentile in origin The author basically follows a simple two source theory To isolate the Lucan purpose we should take into consideration the probability of complex and multiple sources, the complex development of tradition, and justify the judgments of Lucan purpose for each pericope

When we come to the evidence of the socio-political situation of Jesus' life time we have evidence for the period prior to Jesus, up to Herod the Great's death, and for the period leading up to the war of 66-73, but much less for the period of Jesus' ministry, 28-30. Also the author does not sufficiently indicate the cautions needed in the use of the works of Josephus

In the study of specific texts we have many questions. These arise from the fact that many interpretations are based on hypotheses, possible influences of revolutionary and violent attitudes, or ideas coming from the OT or the contemporary world of Jesus, originators of such an interpretation of Jesus as we find in the Infancy narratives. We find great difficulty with the interpretation of the Infancy narratives and of the Lucan redaction of the Baptist ministry. The interpretation of many texts goes beyond the evidence available, and does not take into account the larger context of the Gospel-Acts. The book needs to be read critically as *an* interpretation of Luke, yet also with a mind open to the challenge The Lucan portrait of Jesus does definitely challenge a Christian community that lives in the midst of violence, economic and radical oppression, the arms race and various types of discrimination and a blantant disrespect for the human person The author's dedication to her theme has, however, led her to find and read into Luke more than the text justifies

P M MEAGHER, S J

The Pauline Circle. By F F BRUCE *Exeter, The Paternoster Press*, 1985 Pp 106 N P

This is a collection of short informative sketches of the main group of Paul's co-workers Bruce has given brief biographies of Ananias. Barnabas, Silas, Timothy, Luke, Priscilla and Aquila, Apollos of Alexandria, Titus, Onesimus and Mark In two final brief chapters he has described the large group of co-workers and Paul's hosts and hostesses

The sources used by Bruce for the sketches and the background of the pauline ministry are Paul's letter including the Pastorals, and the Acts Bruce has few doubts about the historical character of the information found in Acts Others would be more discerning

These short sketches remind us of the important fact that Paul had a group of intimate friends and larger groups of co-workers and friends, and thus the book highlights important dimensions of Paul's character and ministry A broader vision of Paul and his ministry opens up when we pay attention to the phenomenon of the pauline co-workers, The short studies of each intimate coworker also helps us to familiarize ourselves with this apostolic group of men and women. This apostolic collaboration of so many different types of persons is a challenge to the modern Christian communities and their leadership.

Surprisingly, Bruce has made no reference in the printed book to the rich, extensive and basic study of Paul and his co-workers by Ollrog, perhaps because it has no English translation, or because the book originated as articles in a popular magazine. The book is non-technical and for general readers. It can be a useful addition to a general library since the information on these persons is collected in a handy volume. It saves the need to consult a larger dictionary

Patrick MEAGHER, S.J.

Paul's Later Letters: From Promise to Fulfilment. By Paul WRIGHTMAN. *New York, Alba House*, 1984 Pp. x-238 $ 9 95

The author is director of religious education at Sacred Heart Church in Medford, Oregon The book is meant to be a study guide, either for personal reflection or for group discussion. The work is a companion volume to the author's previous work *Paul's Early Letters From Hope, through Faith, to Love*, in which he comments on 1-2 Cor, Gal, 1-2 Thess In the present volume he exposes Rom, Philemon, Col, Ephes, Phil and the Pastoral Letters, — as the sub-title indicates, more particularly under the aspect of 'fulfilment'. "These letters cover the period of the last nine years in Paul's life and reflect his fully developed theology and spirituality We see, for example, the rather terse discussion of the meaning of faith in Galatians expand into a full-scale treatise on faith in Romans, we see his provisional concepts on marriage in 1 Corinthians flower into a profound celebration of marriage in Ephesians 5 It is in these letters that his understanding of the nature of Christ, of Church, and of community reaches its greatest heights and depths" (p ix) — All along the exposition the author tries to show how Paul's adventure has become ours, and "that his inspired insights have empowered us to further adventures of our own" (p ix).

The letters are divided in short sections which form a unit A concise title indicates the main theme of each section. The section concludes with some 'factual' and 'personal' questions, viz., "Have I internalized the substance of Paul's thinking?", and "How does what God

has to say through Paul apply to me personally?" (p.x). Each letter is prefaced by a brief sketch of the condition of the church and the particular circumstances which prompted Paul to write. The explanation of the text is presented in simple and clear language, keeping in view the audience (parish study groups). Yet, in view of the readership, I wonder whether it is advisable to enter into literary critical questions especially regarding the unity of some letters or their pauline authenticity. This can hardly be done in a few lines, with the consequence that some of the arguments proposed may look not very convincing. Moreover, frequently the conclusion simply states that the available evidence can be argued both ways, for or against the pauline authenticity.

In commentaries of this kind, opinions about one or other interpretation, almost inevitably, may not be accepted by all readers. I regret that at times points of greater importance concerning Paul's belief or his message look to me too lighly or superficially disposed of, e.g. in the case of Phil 2:11 concerning *the the name above every name*: "The name is LORD, which is English for *kurios*, which is Greek for *adonai*, which is the Hebrew gloss for the divine name YHWH, considered to be so holy and so powerful that it was not allowed to be said or read directly" (p. 199). Similarly "*at the name of Jesus every knee should bow*" (v. 10) is seen as "another radical equation between Christ and God" (p. 200). For both interpretations it will be difficult to show how they fit in the context. Such assertions require a lot of nuancing. The interpretation is the more astonishing as the commentary on 3:21 says that the verse "celebrates Christ's cosmic sovereignty, and is reminiscent of Paul's contemplative vision of the cosmic Christ in Colossians and Ephesians" (p. 200). — The same request for nuances should be made in the "development" of Paul's theology and spirituality mentioned in the Introduction (quoted above), especially regarding the notions of faith, marriage and Christology. — Apart from this reservation the book will prove helpful, as a text-book, for (parish) group study, or for private study or prayerful reading.

J. VOLCKAERT, S.J.

The Gospel in Revelation: Gospel and Apocalypse. By Graeme GOLDSWORTHY. *Exeter, The Paternoster Press/Flemington Markets, NSW*, 1984. Pp. 170. £ 3.95.

For many Christians the Book of Revelation is a closed book, mainly because of the unfamilar literary form. The present work is neither a commentary on Revelation, nor a study of its literary structure. The author seeks to show how the Gospel message, viz. Jesus Christ, is the interpretation of Revelation, just as of the whole Bible.

"The Gospel as the Key to Revelation" (ch. 1) develops the idea that "what God achieved in Christ is the goal of God's purposes as they are expressed in both Old and New Testaments" (p. 25). —The two dimensions of the Christian life, as John draws it, are "The Gospel and our Present Sufferings" (ch. 2). John, an exile on the isle of Patmos because of his active Christian witness, expresses his solidarity with those Christians who are undergoing hardship and persecution. The cause of all suffering is sin. Goldsworthy argues that the believer, even as a child of God, remains a sinner and as he does not escape the woes of this sinful world. However, a little further he is on better ground when he refers to Paul's perspective, viz. that our vital union with Christ unites us with his suffering and glorification. — The mention of our destiny to glorification leads to a consideration about "Justification by Faith in Revelation" (ch. 3). The Gospel message of our justification by the life-death-resurrection of Jesus is found already in the opening lines of Revelation. Throughout the Book we meet Jesus as the centre of the universe — "Biblical Perspectives on the End of the World" (ch. 4), or "The Great Day of God Almighty", is developed at greater length. The End is an important notion of the OT. The great or terrible day of God introduces the new age of Israel's glory. In the NT the Day of the Lord has come with Jesus Christ who fulfills all prophecies. John uses the OT literary forms, however, Jesus' resurrection, ascension, and Pentecost "modify the OT perspective in that the old and the new ages are seen to overlap for a time" (p. 73), viz. between the first and the second coming of Christ. — "The Letters to the Seven Churches" (ch. 5) express the fact that the "cosmic and spiritual warfare" takes place not only outside but also within the present human existence of the people of God. — Ch. 6 on "The Apocalyptic and Prophetic Passages" in the Book of Revelation gives a summary enumeration of the various visions and their character. The reader is warned that there is no question of any chrono-

Ctd. on p. 445. See also pp. 455, 465ff, 474, 479.

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In this Issue

In the August issue we promised to return later to our reflection on some of the questions raised by the first Roman Instruction on the Theology of Liberation (p. 321). We keep our pledge in this issue.

Fr S. AROKIASAMY studies first the concept of "sinful structures" often used in the writings on the theology of liberation. He shows that the concept is not so new as some think. It has a noble pedigree in the Bible, in the history of Christian theology and in the utterances of the recent Popes. The article also shows how an attention to the sinful structures is a necessary complement to a sound theology and preaching on sin.

Approaching liberation theology from the perspectives of the Indian tradition, Fr T. K JOHN studies how theory and praxis bear on one another in the life and thought of Mahatma Gandhi, and how his concrete involvement in the liberation of the poor and the overcoming of injustice led to a fresh theory of the social order and the nature of the religious commitment. In this perspective of concrete praxis, religion and social concern are also seen in their unity.

Ms Marianne KATOPPO examines the Roman instruction from the perspective of a Protestant and a feminist theologian She stresses that liberation theology has a wider scope than it is at times thought, and that the movement is relevant for many others than Latin Americans and Roman Catholics.

As we await still, on going to press, for the second document on the topic, let us hope that a positive and serene dialogue will continue in the Church about the importance of making our faith bear effectively on the critical problems of our society.

Sinful Structures in the Theology of Sin

S. AROKIASAMY, S.J.

MANY Christians are not familiar with the language of sinful structures. For some the expression conjures up the devil of Marxism entering the Christian theology of sin. However, an objective and analytical knowledge of society does reveal structures and forces that work to the detriment of justice, freedom and the dignity due to people. Such structures can be found in the areas of social customs, civil laws, expressions of culture, political organisations and governments. In the sphere of economics, they work at the micro-level of a community and at the macro-level of a country and of the relations between nations.

A consideration of sinful structures is today necessary in the theology of sin, conversion and reconciliation. Theology needs to interact in a healthy way with the analytical studies of society and to integrate the insights of the social sciences. Our Christian vocation requires that we become aware of the sinful structures around us and of our responsibility for their removal.

Anthropology and Structural Epistemology

In traditional moral theology, the stress on the moral autonomy of individual persons was related to an understanding of the human person as a being in himself or in herself. This, while situating the moral agency at the core of the person, led also to an individualistic approach to morality and ethics.[1] The theology of sin reflected also this approach. Today we need to have an understanding of the human person not only in his or her autonomous subjectivity but also in his or her inter-subjectivity. The human person is a person-in-community and a person-in-the-world. Such an integrated and holistic understanding of human person is essential for a critical understanding of the social dimension of sin and of sinful structures.

Together with this understanding of the human person, there is a need to understand human behaviour (or moral behaviour) not just

1. Cf. Marciano VIDAL, "Is morality based on Autonomy Compatible with the Ethics of Liberation ?" in *The Ethics of Liberation — The Liberation of Ethics*, ed. by Dieter MIETH and Jacques POHIER, T. T. Clark Ltd, Edinburgh, 1984, pp. 80-86

as a series of discrete acts (of virtue or vice) but also as a structured behaviour. Individual human acts proceeding from the core of the person create attitudes of mind and heart, and patterns of thinking and judging, and become structured in customs, laws, institutions, symbols and other cultural expressions. Such structuring belongs to all human behaviour, and to moral behaviour in particular. Our understanding of moral behaviour must include this dimension. Liberation theologians call this structural epistemology. The discussion of sinful structures and on our responsibility for changing them requires such epistemology.

We must note, moreover, that the habits of thinking, attitudes of mind, customs, laws and institutions of society that embody the structural dimension of human behaviour acquire gradually an autonomous existence. People begin to behave and function according to these structures, without being aware of their existence, influence and effects. The structures influence human behaviour like a kind of social unconscious. We need a "social psychoanalysis", as it were, to become conscious of them. Social analysis and conscientisation fill this need. When people are conscientised about this "social unconscious" and about the influence of unjust structures, they are challenged with the responsibility to change them. The moral health of a person and of a community demands a consciousness of the structural dimension of the human behaviour and a concomitant sense of responsibility for it. This means that one assumes responsibility for both the subjectivity and the inter-subjectivity of the human person in all these ramifications.

Can Structures Sin?

One often objects to the concept of sinful structures by saying that structures cannot sin: persons sin. This is a legitimate observation. But there are structures of society and culture that originate in sin in so far as they are selfish decisions of individuals or a group or groups of persons, and are also sinful in their being selfishly maintained. In the expression "sinful social structures", "sin" is used analogically. Sin has many meanings, among which the primary analogate is personal sin. The dogmatic concept of "original sin" is an analogical use. In traditional moral theology, sin is used also to be distinguished between material and formal. This tradition goes back to St Thomas.[2]

2. Cf. J. F. DEDEK, "Intrinsically Evil Acts: An Historical Study of the Mind of St Thomas", in *The Thomist* 43 (1979), pp. 385-413.

Material sin is not sin proper, but it refers to an objective human evil of acts done without freedom or malice of the will. Here too the use of "sin" is analogical. Only formal sin involves moral culpability. In a confessional context, one would have an obligation to confess only "formal" grave sins, and not material sins, even though grave.

What has been said so far shows that there is an analogical use of the word sin in tradition. The recent Apostolic Exhortation of John Paul II *Reconciliation and Penance* recognises such an analogy (no 16). The analogical use of sin in "sinful structures" points out that, besides the human acts which are an objective human evil, there are enduring structures of thought, behaviour, attitudes, laws, customs, symbols of society and culture, that go back to selfish choices of people and continue to deprive people of freedom, justice and dignity. They are the effect and the cause of sin. They are evil "sinful structures".

The same Apostolic Exhortation on *Reconciliation and Penance* (no. 16) speaks of *social* sin in three senses (1) social sin means every individual's sin, even the most intimate and secret one affects others because of human solidarity; (2) sins which by their very nature are an attack on the neighbour, like sins against justice, committed by the individual against the community or by the community against the individual; (3) a third sense of social sins corresponds to the sinful social structures — it refers to relationships between different human communities which contradict the plan of God who wills that justice be in the world, and freedom and peace reign between groups and peoples. As Gregory Baum remarks "Human limitations and personal sins compounded have created social sins, and conversely social sins create an environment that promotes personal sins".[3] Social sin creates a situation in which personal sin becomes easy and acceptable, and virtue is made socially — we could also add culturally — difficult Baum, like John Paul II, uses "social sin" in the sense of "sinful structures".

St Paul speaks of the power of sin, and of the law of sin that operates within him, opposing the law of God (Ro 7:22-23). Sin is a power that reigns over us It can make men its slaves (R. 6:15-19) "Sin" here does not seem to be a free human choice. It refers to a universal condition and power external to men. We have to situate the sinful structures into the interplay of sinful human acts and the power and reign of sin over man. In John, the disciples are faced with a choice against the "world" (Jn 15:19; 1 Jn 2:15), the sphere of

3. Cf. *Religion and Alienation*, Paulist Press, New York 1975, p. 204.

[illegible]

sin. Here too we situate sinful structures in the interplay between "the world" and individual human choices.

Sinful Structures from the Viewpoint of the Victim

The proper starting-point for the study of sinful structures is to listen to the cries and anguish of the victims of oppression, and to perceive from there the prejudices, customs, laws, etc., which deprive people of justice and dignity. God's starting-point is not the Pharaoh's court and throne but the cries and groans of Israel (Ex 3:7-9). Yahweh has seen the affliction of Israel, has heard the cry of the people and knows their sufferings. In listening to the affliction and oppression suffered by the victims, Yahweh finds the cause of the oppression to be the Pharaoh and the task-masters of Egypt, and wills to liberate the victims. This shows God's own solidarity with the victims. He takes the side of the Israelites, who have been sinned against. He condemns those who commit oppression and calls the victims to freedom. He does not abandon the victims to their fate. The Bible speaks not only of the evil that people commit but also the evil that people suffer. It is this that should enter our reflection on social sin and sinful structures in a significant manner.

Commitment to and solidarity with the poor, who are the end-product of unjust social structures, enables us to have a sensitivity for the root-cause of poverty and oppression which we would hardly have otherwise. A hard look at sinful social structures springs from such a commitment. This should lead to a transformative praxis.

Structural injustice is a sinful structure. The main effect of such a structure is that its victims are marginalised and, therefore, deprived of any participation in decision-making and of any possibility of changing the unjust situation. The structure prevents people from being the free subjects or agents of their history, able to determine their own destiny. Deprived of the power to be free, they become the objects of manipulation and exploitation by vested interests. For human persons to become the subjects of their own history and destiny is an achievement of freedom and the expression of their dignity as sons and daughters of God. Then they cease to be slaves and objects of manipulation and exploitation. The supreme injustice is to deny them this dignity. Saying "no" to the dignity of people is violence. A system of socio-economic and political arrangement and cultural patterns that deprives people of the dignity of being the subjects of their own history and destiny is unjust, and its sinfulness

has to be placed at the door of those who selfishly initiated and continue to endorse and perpetuate the system.

Some people argue that God's judgement on sin has nothing to say to the capitalist culture, the consumerist society or the competitive economy. The apparent political neutrality of this position leads to a privatisation of faith and is ideologically convenient for the *status quo* of a capitalist society. Individual human choices or decisions lie at the source of sinful structures that deprive people of freedom for self-determination, dignity and justice.

We may understand freedom in two ways. The freedom to be and to live in dignity and justice is the freedom of self-determination for good. This is the capacity to say yes to God and to love. St Augustine calls it *libertas*. This is different from freedom of choice, which in Augustinian terminology is the *liberum arbitrium*. When freedom of choice becomes a choice to do evil, it expresses "slave-will", in the language of Luther; it is *servum arbitrium*.

This slave-will is fascinated by the evil of "the world", the power of sin that reigns over us and enslaves us. A person in a situation of sin, for example, a high caste person in his dealings with low castes, may say, despite all good will towards them, "I have nothing personally against them. It is just that if I let them in, I'll lose face in the community and my good neighbours." Such a person is captive of the caste prejudice of his community. A white person in a predominantly white community ridden with racial prejudice, despite his good will is captive of such a prejudice of his community. The slave-will of such persons (and their acts of free choice) contribute to the caste or racial prejudice of their communities while themselves being entrenched in them.

Theology as a Negative Ideology

We must note that sometimes theological truths come to be used as legitimations of the *status quo* of a community and as an ideology convenient to the establishment. One such truth is that all human beings are sinners, in need of redemption from sin. When the dominated become restless and organise themselves for struggle against injustice, they are often told by their pastors or Christian preachers that they are presumptuous in forgetting that they are sinners.[4] The universality of sin and of the selfishness in the heart have been used to belittle the importance of the existing structures of sin and oppression

4. Cf. G. BAUM, "Should Sin Be Politicised ?" in *The Ecumenist* 21 (1983), p. 55

[illegible]

in society and to evade one's historical responsibility to change [illegible]. Such a responsibility flows from the Lord's words, "If you love me, [illegible] my commandments"[*] (Jn 14:15). The God revealed in the [illegible] is intolerant of all oppression. It is clear that in the theology of [illegible] we must pay attention to the ideological uses that have been made of sin. We must retrieve from the Bible the authentic meaning of [illegible], personal and social, and guard ourselves against the ideological misunderstandings of the past.

In the Church, there is a long theological and spiritual tradition in which Christians were asked to overcome their passions and practise asceticism. Such an individualistic approach to the overcoming of one's passions ignored the social roots of sin. With regard to the transformation of society, traditional theology affirmed that transformed individuals would necessarily bring about a transformation of the societal structures that embody the egoism of the people and function ideologically in support of the *status quo* of the privileged classes. This theology emphasized the conversion and transformation of the individuals and considered virtues and vices individualistically. It did not reckon with the societal dimension of morality. Concerning this view that inner liberation is more important and urgent, and that the changed individuals produce a changed society, Robert Mc Afee Brown has said: "Individual sins get lodged in corporate structures in a way that virtually endow socialised forms of evil with a life of their own."[5] Those who hold the view that the inner transformation will take care of political and economic liberation "ignore a further stubborn fact that changed individuals do not necessarily produce a changed society. They may fight with greater zeal than ever to see that society as they know and love it remains unchanged."[6] While the stress on the transformation of the individual is needed, such transformation has to be part of a broader process of social transformation. Let us listen to Puebla: "So the Church criticises those who would restrict the scope of faith to personal or family life, who would exclude the professional, economic, social and political orders as if sin, love, prayer and pardon had no relevance in them" (no. 515; and also 824).[7]

Sinful Structures from the Point of View of the Affluent

People in affluent countries do not reflect that the afflictions of the poor have social causes hidden in trade relations or industrial hand-

5. Cf. *Theology in a New Key*, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1978, p. 124.
6. *Ibid.*
7. John Eagleson and Philip Scharper (eds), *Puebla and Beyond*, Orbis Books, New York, 1980, pp 195, 232.

ling of scarce raw materials. They tend to regard the misery of other peoples as due to their backwardness, lack of education and of hard work. They see the inequalities between peoples and nations in terms of limitations inherent in human nature, in our present knowledge, and in the catastrophes of nature. What has gone wrong is only due to the limits of knowledge or the policies of poor countries.[8] Affluent countries with this understanding of poverty and underdevelopment come forward with aid and promote development. They feel quite comfortable with the language of inequality between nations and uncomfortable with the language of justice, dignity and brotherhood, which make clear demands on the moral resources of our common humanity. They find it difficult to accept that their advancement and development has its price in the institutionalised insecurity and underdevelopment of the poor nations and unjust economic relations. The failure of UNCTAD to secure just trade and economic relations between developing and developed countries is significant and symptomatic of the approach of the rich nations.

The recent encyclical of John Paul II on Work, *Laborem Exercens*, discusses the concept of the "indirect employer" that affects the relations between the poor and the affluent nations. The encyclical says, "The concept of indirect employer includes both persons and institutions of various kinds, and also collective labour contracts and the principles of conduct which are laid down by these persons and institutions and which determine the whole socio-economic system or are its result" (no. 17). The "indirect employer" practically determines the type of labour contract the direct employer makes and the wages he pays. Highly industrialised countries and giant multinational corporations adopt a policy of fixing very high prices for their products and very low prices for raw materials which they import from developing countries. This creates a big gap between national incomes.[9] This affects the labour policy and the workers' conditions in the economically poor countries. The direct employer, even apart from his own motive for high profit, is forced to adopt an unjust wage system under the influence of the "indirect employer". In an increa-

8. Cf. B. KERANS, *Sinful Social Structures*, Paulist Press, New York 1974, p. 50. This is the only book I know on the theme of "sinful structures".

9. Cf. Richard J BARNET and Ronald E. MÜLLER *Global Reach. The Power of the Multinational Corporations*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1974. On p. 84, a multinational lawyer speaks of the strategy in Honduras: "We must produce a disembowelment of the incipient economy of the country in order to increase and help our aims. We have to prolong its tragic, tormented and revolutionary life; the wind must blow only on our sails and the water must only wet our keel". Cf. also Marshall B. CLINARD and Peter C. YEAGER: *Corporate Crime*, Free Press, New York, 1980.

ingly interdependent world, the protectionist policies of advanced countries affect the trade relations and market conditions of developing countries, resulting in very low wages for the workers in these countries. The "indirect employer", a complex set of factors explained in the encyclical letter, is an unjust structure and a sinful one: it embodies the exaggerated self-interest of advanced countries.

In our consideration of sinful structures we must refer to what Pope Paul VI in his *Populorum Progressio* has to say on capitalism. With the coming of industrialisation, whose benefits one cannot deny, "a system has been constructed which considers profit as the key motive for economic progress, competition as the supreme law of economics, and private ownership of the means of production as an absolute right that has no limits and carries no corresponding obligation."[10] This system of "unchecked liberalism" is denounced by the encyclical. The same encyclical refers to the denunciation of such a system by Pius XI in *Quadragesimo Anno* as "the international imperialism of money."[11] Pope Paul VI says that the abuse of such a system cannot be condemned too strongly. This is a type of capitalism that "has been the source of excessive suffering, injustices and fratricidal conflicts whose effects still persist."[12] Paul VI calls it "the woeful system."[13] Is it not a sinful structure ?

Structural Violence and the "Violence" of the Oppressed

In a situation of oppression, the moment "the oppressed lift their heads, with a will to freedom and love for the future, not hatred but war begins."[14] The justice of this struggle against injustice — institutionalized injustice — is not recognised. The oppressors seem suddenly "enlightened" about "violene", and define the actions of the oppressed claiming their rights as violence, thus pre-emptying any challenge to the prior violence of their own organised, orchestrated and structural injustice. The oppressed are actually forced to struggle against a totalising system and give witness to an alternative society.[15] The violence of the oppressor dehumanises the oppressor and the oppressed. The oppressed, fighting to remove the violence of the oppressor, even if he appears to be violent liberates the oppressed

10 *Populorum Progressio*, no. 26
11 *Quadragesimo Anno*, in *AAS* 23 (1931), p 212.
12 *Populorum Progressio*, no 26
13. *Ibid*
14. E. Dussel, *Ethics and Theology of Liberation.* Orbis, New York 1978, p. 43
15. *Ibid.*

from oppression and humanises the oppressors by depriving them of the power which dehumanises them.[16] Injustice is what reaps a harvest of violence. Those who make a peaceful revolution impossible make violent revolution unavoidable.[17]

Bonded labourers, when conscientised, make demands for just wages and healthy conditions of work and freedom. The landlords consider such a claim a sign of revolt and violence. They have at their disposal all the economic and political power to suppress the demand for justice. The situation of bonded labour embodies the sinful egoism of rich landlords, and it is an oppressive violence that provokes, sometimes unavoidably, the defensive violence of the oppressed Often this prior provocative violence is left unquestioned and swept under the carpet, and the just resistance, sometimes necessitating the use of force, is called violence and ruthlessly put down. The rich landlords who one-sidedly define violence perpetuate a situation of violence. In the moral analysis of violence, we should consider the experience of its victims — the oppressed Only if we listen in solidarity to the cries of the victims of oppression, can we understand what violence does to people, see its inhuman face and eliminate it from the face of the earth. Our commitment to non-violent revolution should have this starting-point.

Sinful Expressions in Culture

Sinful structures can exist in the cultures of people Structures of the mind can oppress people A particular ethnic group inherits symbols of prejudice by which it looks down on people of another ethnic group In India, the caste prejudice is perpetuated in language and cultural symbols So-called high caste people use spontaneously *neech* (in Hindi meaning "low") when they have to scold a person of a scheduled caste A child of a high caste growing up in the milieu of his or her caste imbibes the prejudices of the group against the so-called low caste A child of a high caste can address the oldest person of a low caste using "tu", "te" (form of "you" addressed to equals or inferiors). The oldest man of a low caste has to address even the youngest person of a high caste with respectful titles such as "Swami" (lord) or "Ayya" (in Tamil "sir") The low caste persons cannot give themselves high-sounding or noble names. In Tamilnadu scheduled caste people give themselves names that signify inferiority.

16. Cf Paulo FREIRE, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Hanmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1972, p 32. Cf also Francis TURNER, "Co-workers in His Design", *The Way* 23 (1983), pp 171-180

17 Words of Robert KENNEDY as quoted in *Mission* no 4 (1984), p. 142.

The *karma* theory is a cardinal belief in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. This theory is exploited for the purpose of explaining the inferior and superior status of people and their castes. It is used by shastris to justify the status quo of the oppressed and depressed dalits. The low image of the "harijans" upheld by the Brahminic ideology and, in turn, internalised by the harijans themselves damages the people's dignity as persons.

The image of woman as inferior to man is also perpetuated through literature, proverbs and the sexist language in a male-dominated society. In India, the image of woman as burdensome and therefore unwelcome at birth, sometimes even before birth, is most damaging to her dignity as person It is no exaggeration to say that many, including the women who have internalised the low image of themselves imposed by a male-dominated society, receive the news of the brirth of a girl with a tinge of sadness or even nervous fear. One notes the spontaneous joy at the birth of a boy When people pray for *putra santanam* (children), they mean boys If our scientific knowledge can help detect the gender of the child in the womb, many would not hesitate to abort a female baby. Such an inferior image of woman is made more oppressive by the consumerist tradition of dowry. A deeper analysis of this prejudice will reveal that the root cause is the greed of people that puts female babies at a discount. Feminist movements expose structures of sexism, androcentrism and patriarchy embedded in our language, patterns of thought and social institutions. Sexism defined "as a way of ordering life by gender" leads to a devaluing of persons on the basis of sex. This is a sinful structure or a form of collective sin.[18] Feminist movements work for the liberation of women from sexism.

There is need to expose the sinful expressions, symbols, patterns of thinking and feeling found in our culture and literature, even school text books, with a view to creating a new culture based on justice and love. Creating new cultural images that are liberating — such can be a long-term educational project. We need movements of counter-culture that affirm the equal dignity of every human person

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18 Cf Ursula KING, "Women in Dialogue", *Heythrop Journal* 26 (1985), p. 133; Cf Janet KALVEN, "Feminist Theology in the United States", *Vidyajyoti* 48 (1984), pp 126-134; Regina COLL "Sin and Morality in Feminist Perspective", *ibid.*, pp. 135-142.

Sinful Structures in the Documents of the Magisterium

In the documents of the Church in recent times the use of "unjust structures" of society is common. In general there is a shying away from the expression "sinful structures". In the Puebla document of the Latin American bishops, we come across the phrase "institutional violence."[19] The document speaks of the "mystery of sinfulness" that "impregnates the mechanisms of society"(no 70), "sinful systems" of capitalism and Marxism (no. 92), and also refers to the "sinful structures" (no. 452) reflected in the organization of human society, quoting John Paul II (no. 452), and mentions the "objectivations of sin in the economic, social, political, and ideologico-cultural orders" (no. 1113). The recent document *Instruction on Certain Aspects of the Theology of Liberation* by the S Congregation for the Doctrine of the faith, in section IV no. 15, speaks of "bad social, political or economic structures" or "structures which are evil and which cause evil." The second draft of the American bishops peace pastoral refers to deterrence as a "sinful situation."[20]

We already referred earlier to the Apostolic Exhortation of John Paul II, *Reconciliation and Penance*, and its teaching on "social sins." The third meaning of social sin corresponds to sinful structures. They are relationships which "are not always in accordance with the plan of God, who intends that there be justice in the world, and freedom and peace between individuals, groups and peoples."[21] The Pope reminds us that responsibility to change "those disastrous conditions and intolerable situations"[22] depends on us.

Sinful Structures and Class Struggle

The class struggle is the reaction to the unjust socio-economic and political interests, arrangements and structures which create a situation of conflict between classes. The class struggle is a fact, and no one can be neutral in this situation It is not a creation of the oppressed. To struggle against the "class enemy" is to struggle against this sinful situation of violence and injustice and to work for the creation of a just social order and a new political and economic system. Liberation Theology understands class struggle in this sense [23] Class struggle need

19 *Puebla*, no 1259
20 Cf R. McCormick, "Notes on Moral Theology", *TS* 44 (1983), p 113
21 *Reconciliation and Penance*, no 16
22 *Ibid*
23. Cf. G. Gutierrez, *Theology of Liberation*, Orbis Books, New York 19 37 pp 277-279. This understanding of class struggle is in no way contradicted by John

[illegible] not necessarily mean class hatred. It is a struggle to liberate the oppressed from their dehumanising situation and challenge the oppressor to change and to become human.[24]

The negative judgement passed on the class struggle by the Apostolic Exhortation *Reconciliation and Penance* and by *The Instruction on Certain Aspects of the Theology of Liberation* of C.D.F. is understandable, because these documents take the class struggle to imply hatred, and assume the Marxist interpretation of the term. Recognition of class and class conflict is part of the Catholic tradition. Pius XI in *Quadragesimo Anno* distinguishes between class struggle carried on by hatred and envy and the class dispute (*classium disceptatio*) for the reason of justice.[25] Nell-Breuning, one of the writers of *Quadragesimo Anno*, points out that Pius XI says not only that such class dispute can sometimes be permitted but also that it is needed for the building of a class-free society.[26] We must struggle that society becomes class-free, without the classes liquidating each other. This is possible when we fight against the unjust arrangement of labour and capital, characteristic of the capitalist system which affirms the priority of capital over labour.[27]

The Moral Responsibility for Sinful Structures

The moral responsibility for sinful structures rests on concrete persons. To take a stand against sinful institutions and structures is part of a moral commitment to the transformation of society and the creation of a new humanity. Responses that stop with relief — the almsgiving approach to the problems of social justice — and responses that are satisfied with reformist measures within an existing system of injustice, fail to move towards an alternative system based on justice and do not express a radical commitment to the creation of a new society. Reformist moral systems that support such responses are attempts to be moral in Egypt without raising the question "How to get out of Egypt ?"[28]

Paul II's Apostolic Exhortation *Reconciliation and Penance* no 16, which says that "The class struggle, whoever the person who leads it or on occasion seeks to give it a theoretical justification, is a social evil."

24. *Ibid* Cf no 56 on p 285 for chapter 12.
25. Cf *AAS* 23 (1931), p 213.
26. Cf. G V. Nell-Breuning, "Marxismus zu leicht Genommen", *Stimmen Der Zeit* Heft 2 (1984), pp 89-90
27. Cf. *Laborem Exercens* of John Paul II, no. 12. Cf. Nell-Breuning, *art. cit.*, p 90.
28. Cf. E. Dussel, "An Ethic of Liberation: fundamental hypotheses" in *The Ethics of Liberation — The Liberation of Ethics*, p. 56.

A change of structures and the creation of new, more just and humane institutions is not enough. It is essential that they remain just and humane in the on going life of the community. People who create just and human structures today, or those who inherit them, cannot guarantee their justness and humaness for tomorrow. People succumb to egoism and can corrupt good and just structures and institutions. This is why there is a need to stress the Christian call to continual conversion of heart for preserving and strengthening in a creative way what is just and humane in society. One cannot guarantee once and for all sinlessness in people and justness in structures and institutions.

Concerning the causal factor in evil structures, the document of C.D.F. on Liberation Theology does accept that there are structures which cause evil [29] The document does not show analytically, with examples, how they cause evil. It says that the evil structures are "the results of man's actions and so are the consequences more than causes."[30] The document recognises some measure of causality of evil in structures, without showing what kind of causality is involved Had the document shown that evil structures are not only consequences of selfish decisions of individuals or groups but also that they function as instrumental causes of evil, it would have pointed the way to the responsibility of people for changing them. Unjust, structures, initiated and perpetuated by people, begin to have an autonomous existence and function as *instrumental causes* of injustice Of course, instrumental causes function only through the efficient causality of persons Liberation theology pays specific attention to the agency of unjust structures, i.e to the causal dimension of the sinful structures [31]

In the document of C D.F. there is a seemingly "spiritualised" notion of sin. Although sin at the core of the human person is an alienation and slavery, yet it has an intrinsic and inseparable connexion with the time-space-bound history of human persons, especially their inter-human relationships and their community. The message of the Gospel as a challenge to conversion is not to be "spiritualised" but to be understood as deeply personal, social and historical at the same time. A deeper knowledge of sin includes its expression as alienation and slavery not only in the skein of inter-

29. Cf *Instruction on Certain Aspects of Liberation Theology*, iv. 15.
30 *Ibid*
31 Cf Franz J HINKELAMMERT, "Der Befriende Gott und Die Soziale Sünde" in *Orientierung* 31, Marz, 1985, p 64.

[illegible]
personal relationships, but also in the socio-economic, political and cultural dimensions of the individual and collective life of persons. The call to change sinful structures belongs to the personal call to the conversion of each. The Gospel message of conversion concerns this whole complex reality of sin, in its personal, social and cosmic dimensions.

To overcome the sinful structure we trace them back to the freedom and responsibility of the individuals or groups who initiated them from a motive of selfish gain. These people may be dead or off the scene. But the structures they initiated perdure and damage the justice due to people. Those who inherit and participate in these structures may often not be aware of the deprivation they cause and the victims they create. Like the Nazi officers, they often execute what others have decided and decreed They are thus instruments of the organised sin of society. Once they know the sinful origin of these structures and the actual damage they cause to people's justice and dignity, they can be neutral or indifferent no longer. Knowledge brings responsibility If they refuse to take a stand against injustice, they become " accomplices". Here one could read the words of Jesus in Lk 11 47-51

> Woe to you ! for you build the tombs of the prophets whom your fathers killed. So you are witnesses and consent to the deeds of your fathers, for they killed them, and you build their tombs Therefore also the Wisdom of God said, "I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute," that the blood of all the prophets, shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary Yes, I tell you, it shall be required of this generation

In their conversion, Christians assume a responsibility to deinstitutionalise the structures of sin.[32] People perpetuate the sinfulness of structures by consciously preserving interpretations of them convenient to their unjust privileges. Thus affluent people or nations tend to attribute the poverty of people and of poor nations to their backwardness and laziness, or support the *varna* theology and and the *karma* theory so convenient to the *status quo* of the high castes, etc. In Latin America, when priests, religious and bishops take up the cause of the poor in obedience to the Gospel message, the powers that be call them communists and subversive, and use the mass media which they control to spread this interpretation. Conversion should touch such areas of our ideological affiliations.

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32 DUSSEL, *Ethics and Theology of Liberation*, p 49.

To conclude our discussion on moral responsibility for sinful structures; in our theology of sin and in our commitment to justice, we must keep a proper dialectic between personal sin and sinful structures. Responsibility for "social sin" or sinful structures lies in persons. The words of Dr. E. Stanley Jones are pertinent here, "Christianity that doesn't begin with the individual doesn't begin, Christianity that ends with the individual ends."[33]

Conclusion: Rethinking the Theology of Sin

Our preaching on sin, which is part of the proclamation of the Gospel, must reckon with the fact that human persons are both subjects and objects of sin. That they are objects of sin means that they are victims of the sinful oppression of others or that they are sinned against.[34] We often forget this dimension in our preaching on sin. Without an awareness of unjust societal structures and the social causes of poverty and exploitation, pastors may tell poor workers or bonded labourers in their congregations to be just and fair in their dealings with others, or exhort women, sexually exploited by rich landlords or contractors on account of their extreme poverty, to be chaste and faithful Pastors may thus forget that these people are victims of exploitation. With an individualistic approach to sin, we may continue to tell people to conquer their passions, individual greed and sensuality, while ignoring the structures and situations which individual and collective greed originates and perpetuates. A one-sided call to conversion may create a fatalistic attitude and resignation to situations of sin by which people are victimised and smother the historical responsibility to struggle against the power of sin in our culture and social institutions, and to create a new society based on justice and love.

A theology of sin should clearly include a challenge to, and conscientization on the societal dimensions of sin, virtue, conversion and reconciliation. The "hardening of the heart" (*sklerokardia*) spoken of in the Bible[35] is not merely a matter of the heart of individuals alone, but also of the compulsions and oppressions which get embodied in laws, customs and structures of society. In the prevailing ethos of conformity people tend to take these for granted.

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33. Quoted in the *Bulletin of Christian Sikh Studies*, vol. 13, no 2 (July 1984), p 3.
34. Raymond FUNG, in *Your Kingdom Come*, W.C.C., Geneva 1980, p. 129.
35. Mt 19: 8.

Forgiveness and reconciliation re-establish our freedom and dignity as children of God and enable us to make the liberating exodus, both from the slavery of personal sins and from the dehumanizing conditions created by sinful structures. The struggle to overcome sinful structures expresses our commitment to make virtue socially possible and vice socially difficult. In the words of W. Rauschenbusch, we can no more be content with a sort of "ascetic Christianity that called the world evil and left it. Humanity is waiting for a revolutionary Christianity which will call the world evil and change it."[36]

In our pastoral catechesis of the theology of sin, conversion and reconciliation, we must speak in an integrated way of the personal and social dimensions of these realities. We need to speak not only of the vocation and salvation of individual human persons but also the vocation and salvation of humankind as a whole, as the community of God's family.[37]

Negatively, the theology of sin must speak against liberal individualism that weakens and destroys our communitarian vocation and denies our inter-relatedness to one another and to the cosmos. At the same time, it should sound a note of caution against the impersonalism that may result from a one-sided stress on the structures of sin and bypass the responsibility of persons who create, endorse and perpetuate them.

The theological discourse on sin, conversion, forgiveness and reconciliation must not end up in purely parenetic or homiletic talk with one-sided stress on some aspects. It should not ignore other equally important aspects The long-neglected social dimensions need stress today more than ever, and this cannot but have consequences in pastoral praxis.

36. Quoted in J. MOLTMANN's *Religion, Revolution and the Future*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1969, pp. 34-35.
37. Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, no. 9.

Theology of Liberation and the Gandhian Praxis: A Social Spirituality for India

T. K. JOHN, S.J.

"GOD always reveals Himself to us in some concrete shape"[1] wrote Gandhiji in 1926 to the members of his ashram. On another occasion, while commenting on the central message of the Gita, he observed that "a dharma which does not serve practical needs is no dharma, it is adharma"[2] These two affirmations can be regarded as a good summary of Gandhiji's entire life and activities and of his own interpretation of them, as we can gather from the very title of his autobiography, *My Experiments with Truth*. His aim is to find a way in which all persons can live together as full human beings, in mutual acceptance and respect, orienting the economic, political, social, cultural and even religious activities to the benefit of as many members of society as possible. Then out of such an experiment in living together it would be possible to derive insights that could constitute the foundation of a new humanism, and a philosophy and way of life capable of inspiring all towards their ultimate destiny Methodologically, Gandhi's life is an excellent illustration of the theory-praxis correlationship, of an ideal and its realization, a vision and its actualisation. In the following pages we make an effort to trace the genesis and meaning of *the Gandhian praxis*.

A feature common to the newly emerging theology of liberation in the so-called Third World countries and the Gandhian experiment is perhaps their success in bringing about a fusion between theory and praxis. Critics say that the world has reached a saturation point in the proliferation and dissemination of ideas. The great teachers and founders of religions have left behind a rich heritage of wisdom. The problem facing modern culture is this: while the insights of science have been reduced to technology, and through industry have revo-

1. *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (hereafter *CW*), Vol 32, The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1969, p 439
2. *Ibid.*, p. 152.

intensified the life of people up to the point of even creating a danger of a total annihilation of humanity, the insights of religion, intended to achieve the total transformation of human and social living, have by and large not been operationalised and have therefore failed to accomplish that conversion. Religion has been bypassed or ignored. Gandhi's main life-task lay in a successful effort to make religion bear upon such a transformation of the social order. Similarly, the effort of the theologians of liberation is precisely to bring about a transformation of society by the insights of religion.

Genesis of the Gandhian Praxis

Gandhiji was provoked by the experiences of exploitation and enslavement, of poverty and helplessness, common to the people in India and in South Africa. Such experiences set him on a path that turned out to be prophetic in many ways. Like the poisonous pink-yellow smoke that later hovered over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, a strange smoke hovered over the entire Indian sub-continent during the childhood days of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. It was the presence of the mercantile power that had landed stealthily on the Coromondal coast, had subsequently bought political power and had grown in size to become the large military, administrative and economic power under which the country lay writhing. That cloud had obscured the vision of the people for years, and had choked the life-breath of its culture and drained its economic resources, leaving deep wounds which are yet to heal. While in England, and later in India, Gandhi was appalled by the manoeuvres and manipulations of the Christian preachers and missionaries to get him into their net. When in South Africa, he experienced directly the devil of the sense of "superiority" of the whites and their contempt for the "dark-skinned" and the "blacks". The Moritzburg railway station still stands as a memorial of this. It was at this station that Gandhi tasted the bitter consequences of the depravity of the system. Barrister M. K. Gandhi, in possession of the correct and legally obtained ticket, had occupied a first class compartment: he was pushed by the brute white power out of the compartment, and his luggage was scattered all over the platform. The Asiatic Ordinance of 1906 required that all Indians (shipped by the British to South Africa to dig their conquered mines, to lay rail tracks and plough their farmlands, all at shockingly cheap wages), register their names and be finger-printed. This was to prevent their becoming domiciled or acquiring land in that continent. The treatment meted out to Gandhi and his fellow-citizens by the forefathers of the present racist movement

in Britain and of the apartheid regime in South Africa challenged Gandhi to the core. The worst was yet to come. It came when he found that the religion of these colonial masters had neither the vision nor the moral courage to denounce these ungodly practices.

Though son of a statesman, by profession Gandhi was a lawyer. Through his daily contact and confrontation with the regime, the highly ethical-moral sensibility of the young lawyer began slowly to fathom the depth of human wickedness and callousness. At the same time, Providence brought him in contact with three prophets of counter-cultural protest: John Ruskin, Leo Tolstoy and Henry Thoreau. The Sermon on the Mount had its deep formative impact upon him. The inspiration from these sources became a force, a stream capable of initiating actions that would effectively counter the unjust social system. It occured to Gandhi that the economic, political and social depravities of the colonial system were a symptom of a deeper malady that had its roots in the ethico-moral and even religious spheres of the rulers He concluded that morality is the basis of all human deliberations and decisions and that *truth* is the substance of all morality, the sovereign principle that governs and guides all other principles and values [3] This journey through the realm of ethics, morality and religion to his philosophy of action and involvement can be traced as follows:

1. Seeing God Face to Face the Ultimate Destiny of Man

"Man's ultimate aim is the realization of God"[4] and "what I want to achieve — what I have been striving and pining to achieve these thirty years — is self-realization, to see God face to face, to attain moksha. I live and move and have my being in pursuit of this goal."[5] In line with the thinking and aspirations of humanity, especially of the founders of religions and seekers after God, Gandhi states in simple terms that all his life and activities are guided by a transcendent goal.

2. Truth is that God: a Point of Departure

Gandhi always claimed that he was only a seeker after truth. "I am but a seeker after truth. I claim to be a votary of truth from my childhood. It was the most natural thing to me."[6] The practice of truth characterised his early boyhood days. His unwillingness to

3. M. K. GANDHI, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* (hereafter *The Story*), Ahmedabad, Navjivan Karyalaya, 1933, pp. 87-88.
4. *Harijan*, 29 Aug 1939.
5 GANDHI, *The Story*, pp 4-5
6. R. K. PRABHU (ed.), *Truth is God*, Ahmedabad, Navajivan Publishing House, 1955, p 314.

commit fraud in the dictation class, his confession to his father of stealing gold from his brother's armlet, his reactions when he saw a drama depicting the story of Harishchandra, are some of his early experiences of truth. *Doing* the truth became an early habit with Gandhi. Although the well-known saying "God is Love" attracted him, yet truth had a still deeper appeal for him, so much so that later on he would say that to find the truth completely is to realise oneself and one's destiny.[7] These early intimations matured and after careful consideration Gandhi came to his own conclusion: "Truth is God", rather than "God is Truth". "My prayerful search gave me the revealing maxim, Truth is God, instead of the usual one, God is Truth. That maxim enables me to see God face to face as it were. I feel Him pervade every fibre of my being."[8] In the same context Gandhi states that devotion to Truth is the only justification for our existence and that all our activities should be centred on Truth, governed by Truth, and move towards the attainment of Truth.

3. *Truth: Absolute and Relative*

Inaccessible, invisible, intangible, ungraspable and transcendent — these are some of the epithets with which the learned describe God. Gandhi claimed that he was a "practical dreamer", desirous of converting his dreams into realities[9] He did not want to speculate on the nature of God or prove His existence. Because of his deeply felt awareness of the presence of the Divine in and around him, he came to the next conclusion that Truth as God is a concretely realizable goal, however limited that may be. This is done by means of one's adherance to what he called the *relative truth* He states: "But as long as I have not realised this Absolute Truth, so long must I hold by the relative truth, as I have conceived it That relative truth must, meanwhile, be my beacon, my shield and buckler."[10]

Relative truth, consistently pursued, will lead to closer and closer approximations to the Absolute Truth or God. The merit of such a distinction between absolute and relative truth lies in the acceptance of the need and possibility of a self-corrective process of experimentation with one's own vision of life and goals. The very word "experiment" implies a disclaimer of any finality in what one finds and a certain unconditionality and open-endedness as far as the outcome is concerned. Therefore this distinction does away with any claim to "fullness of

7 *Ibid.*, p. 3.
8. *Ibid.*, p 4.
9. *Harijan*, 17 Nov 1933.
10. GANDHI, *The Story*, p 8.

truth", which often leads to intolerance and prevents progress in knowledge. For Gandhi it implied a willingness to admit one's failures, a humility to be a seeker and not a possessor of truth, and a desire for harmony between thought, word and action.

4. Realization of Truth: Through Service of Humankind

India has a long history of men and women searching for God. Some have undertaken this journey by flocking to holy places, holy men and sacred shrines. Others have spent their time in rituals and sacrifices. Some have sought Him in yogic practices and in meditations. Caves and mountains have been frequented in search of the Absolute. Rigorous austerities and the renunciation of personal and family possessions and relations characterise other ventures in this line.

Gandhi introduced a historic corrective to this great tradition. Drawing inspiration from the theology of the Gita and led by his own instinct, he said that his path was different: "For me the road to salvation lies through the incessant toil in the service of my country and there through of humanity."[11] In this way Gandhi becomes a dynamic agent of the historical process. To become an ethico-religious person depends on one's response to, and acceptance of, God's revelation in history. It is in history and its struggle that we discover ourselves. To accept others in their totality, to love them as they are, to care for them in all their needs, to share all their sufferings and agonies, is the way to the realization of the relative truth. Gandhi says: "The immediate service of all human beings becomes a necessary part of the endeavour simply because the only way to find God is to see Him in His creation and be one with him. This can only be done by the service of all."[12] And so he clearly states that "I am endeavouring to see God through service of humanity."[13] The significance of these assertions and of the *new sadhana* Gandhi is evolving cannot escape any one.

Firstly, it implies that there exists a fundamental unity in all creation, especially among all human beings, and between creation and God, so that to identify oneself with others and serve them is to be one with God. Gandhi himself says that "we all claim descent from the same God and hence all life in whatever form it appears must be essentially one."[14]

11. PRABHU, *Truth is God*, p 5.
12 *Harijan*, 29 Aug. 1939.
13. PRABHU, *Truth is God*, p 5
14. *Ibid.*

Secondly, Gandhi discovers in the depth of human service a meaning and value equal to and even surpassing what is normally associated with rituals, sacrifices and other "religious activities".

Thirdly, this *sadhana* enables one to be truthful to God through His own creation. The service, especially of the poorest, the weakest, and the lowliest, is a great honour rendered to God since He is found among them. Says Gandhi: "To relieve the distress of the unemployed, by providing them work, to tend to the sick, to wean people from their insanitary habits, to educate them in cleanliness and healthy living conditions, should be the concern of every seeker after Truth."[15]

Fourthly, by such an attitude of service, religion is rescued from its isolation and given a wider interpretation and richer meaning. Every kind of activity undertaken in pursuance of the goal of serving God's people becomes a kind of religious activity.

Finally, a privileged place and role is assigned to liberative actions and projects. The people Gandhi wanted to serve, whether in India or in South Africa, were those whom internal discord, poverty, political subjugation and economic degradation had condemned to servitude. To serve them meant to raise them morally, economically, spiritually and culturally. The first step is to infuse in all a spirit of self-respect and self-reliance. For Gandhi the pursuit of Truth is through those forms of political action which restore the dignity and give courage to people. Action on behalf of social justice and participation in the national struggle for political, economic cultural and religious freedom, becomes a new kind of *sadhana*. The emergence of a new society is thus a means in history for attaining an end that goes beyond history. For Gandhi, self-realization, which is the attainment of Truth as God, is through this service of his brothers and sisters. He summarises his views as follows: "The whole of my activity whether it may be called social, political, humanitarian or ethical is directed to that end. And as I know that God is found more often in the lowliest of his creatures than in the high and mighty, I am struggling to reach the status of these. I cannot do so without their service. Hence my passion for the service of the suppressed classes."[16]

The Roots: Praxis in Early Hinduism

The Indian quest for meaning can be presented as a movement from meaninglessness and unreality to meaning and reality, from

15. *CW*, Vol 68, p 43
16. *Young India*, 11 Sept 1924 (quoted by S. ABID HUSSAIN, *The Way of Gandhi and Nehru*, Bombay, Asia Publishing House 1959, p 35).

annihilation and disintegration to life and deathlessness, from confusion, obscurity and darkness to clarity and light, from change, impermanence and delusive phenomenal existence to existence in fullness, i.e., to Reality. The way of knowledge and enlightenment, of sacrifice and rituals, and the way of love and surrender were among the means that emerged in the course of India's long historic march. There is one thing that is common to all these mārgas: *an insistence upon praxis, upon doing.*

Among the various schools that have sprung up in this context mention could be made of the *Śabdādvaita* of the grammarians. According to them the ultimate Reality is Śabda Brahman, and the universe, the world of empirical experience is only an evolute, a manifestation, as *artha* or material thing, of the non-empirical Śabda Brahman. A vital relationship exists between the material things and their root in the Śabda state. Cosmic existence is the *bhāṣyā*, the the expression, of the Śabda Brahman.

This realistic philosophy is underscored in the Gita The theistic thought of the Gita affirms an essential link both between creation and sacrificial *action* (3:10) and between the manifest and the unmanifest realities. Thus action springs from Brahman (3:15), for God is ever engaged in action (3.22). If God were not always engaged in action then the world would slip back into chaos (3.24). Indeed the very creation of the world was accompanied by a sacrificial *action* (3.10) Krishna will explain the meaning and goal of his activity as the welfare of all (*lokasamgraha*). The ancient practice of offering sacrifices (*yajña*) is here given a new meaning and interpretation. a *yajña* is an *action* performed for the welfare of the world, for the betterment and well-being of the wider society.

Gandhi would not only subscribe to this interpretation whole-heartedly but also further widen the scope of its meaning: "Wherever we find anyone. . who suffers when others suffer and who practices the supreme *yajña* of maintaining a sameness of attitudes towards all, there, we may be sure, Brahman is present."[17] For Gandhi *yajña* is any activity aimed at the benefit of as many members of the human society as possible. For example, we know and worship God through physical labour because it leads to an increased production of food for the maintenance of society Instead of restricting the meaning and scope of *yajña* to the pouring of an oblation into the ritual fire, Gandhi

17. *CW*, Vol. 32, p. 161.

saw it present in every kind of physical labour that helps the wider society. He says: "If water was scarce and we had to fetch it from a distance of two miles, fetching water would be a *yajña*."[18] Widening further the scope of *yajña* Gandhi says that *yajña* taken in its widest sense includes every thought, word, and above all deed which most conduces to the welfare of the greatest number in the widest area, and which can be performed by the largest number of men and women with the least trouble. Indeed, our body is given to us in order that we may serve all creation with it. We all are born with *yajña*, and so we all are debtors to all creatures.[19]

Thus *karma* and *yajña*, two traditionally ritualistic terms, are endowed with a new meaning and thereby service of humankind becomes a highly religious act. One can notice the following elements in the new meaning given by Gandhi to *yajña* and *karma*

Firstly, the traditional separation between the sacred and the secular is removed. Man/woman is an integral person and so her/his activity also bears the integral character of the whole person

Secondly, the extreme individualism that characterised much of the ancient seeking after God is corrected in that the whole human society is taken into the ambit of the religious activity According to the earlier understanding, an individual could be motivated to seek his own merit in offering oblations to a particular god, or seek his own individual liberation through his ascetical practices Gandhi places the needs of the wider society before the religious seekers.

Thirdly, the mutual relatedness of all persons and things in the universe, especially in society, is acknowledged The highly abstract advaitic concept is brought down to the level of social praxis Thus a religious insight or activity becomes economic praxis. Conversely, without this economic praxis, by which and through which a person expresses her/his indebtedness to all, one cannot attain moksha.

Fourthly, any place can become a place of worship and service. Gandhi never indulged in the practice of building temples, of visiting them or of offering gifts in these sacred places. He never went on a pilgrimage. His shrine was the Harijan colony or the *khadi* hall, and his pilgrimages were his travels through the Indian villages and towns in order to bring about amity, unity, love and service. He says: "... the best and most understandable place where He can be worshipped

18 *Ibid.*, p. 164

19. Jag Parvesh CHANDER (ed), *Gita the Mother*, Lahore, Indian Printing Works, 1946-47, pp. 112-113.

as a living creature. The service of the distressed, the crippled and the helpless among the living things constitutes worship of God.[20]

Finally, by thus giving a wider meaning to these terms Gandhi challenges religion to play its true role in society. The removal of the evils in society is the responsibility of *dharma*. The economic well-being of every member of society thus becomes a religious activity. Half-starved, ill-clad and illiterate human beings are no honour to the great God whose worship is the alleged concern of the professional religionists.

Satya in Praxis

a. Satyagraha

Haing set as his goal in life the realisation of God as Truth, to be attained through the service of humanity, Gandhi now proceeds to the actualisation of that vision. The starting point of his journey was the mass of the enslaved and degraded human beings that surrounded him. The exploitation of the wealth of the colonised, their mental, cultural and moral subjugation to the conquerors, the hatred and greed that destroyed the health of individuals and society, the communal fights and antipathy — these were some of the evils with which Gandhi was confronted. For him all these were forms of untruth. To fight against these evils, to heal society of its malaise and to introduce revolutionary changes into it Gandhi needed a new weapon. He forged it in the concept of *satyagraha* which is based on his understanding of *ahimsa*. Satyagraha is relative truth *in praxis*.

Gandhi believed that we must overcome evil by good, counteract hatred by love, dissolve enmity by forgiveness, avoid religious intolerance by the promotion of mutual respect and understanding, remove tensions and conflict of views by compromise — a compromise based on the recognition of the pluralism of perceptions. These principles are gleaned from the great teachers and masters of humanity. All of Gandhi's campaigns against the moral evils and practices in India and South Africa are based on these golden principles. Satyagraha tries to incorporate the rich wisdom of humankind into a *technique of action*.

Insistence on truth, holding on to truth, tenacity in truth, soul-force, moral force, spiritual power — these are some of the meanings he gave for the neologism *satyagraha*. *Sat* means reality, and *satya*

20. *CW*, Vol. 36, p 296.

[illegible] truth — both terms being etymologically related. The term *satyagraha* was coined in South Africa as early as [illegible], during the first phase of the campaign to secure elementary human rights for the Indian immigrants. The word *sadagraha* ("firmness in a good cause") had first been proposed to him. Gandhi accepted it but made a correction: "I therefore corrected it to 'Satyāgraha'. Truth (*satya*) implies love, and firmness (*āgraha*) engenders and therefore serves as a synonym for force. I thus began to call the Indian movement 'Satyagraha' that is to say, the force which is born to Truth and Love or non-violence, and gave up the use of the phrase 'passive resistance'."[21]

The Sermon on the Mount, the Bhagavadgita, and the teachings of Tolstoy and Thoreau influenced Gandhi in giving rich content to the new Indian term *satyagraha*. The following elements may be noted in satyagraha as a *technique of action*, and an moral *praxis*:

Firstly, satyagraha is the method of a movement intended to fight societal violence and injustice. It is an organised action-programme, a campaign. In military campaigns, police action or organised violence, *lattis*, guns, tear-gas, bombs, abusive words, organised lies, the concealment of truth by propaganda, manipulation, manoeuvering — these and other forms of physical or psychological force are used. In satyagraha the entire stress is on the replacement of these ungoldly and dehumanising weapons and strategies by truth, love, honest exchange, and non-cooperation with unjust laws. The moral and spiritual force is the power in satyagraha.

Secondly, satyagraha, born of the conviction that truth will eventually overcome all evils, instils self-confidence in the hearts of the powerless. For when one refuses to do a thing that is repugnant to one's conscience, one is using "soul-force". Holding on to the twin truth of *satya* and *ahimsā* bestows upon the satyagrahi an invincible endurance, patience and power

Thirdly, satyagraha avoids every form of hatred or taking undue advantage of the weakness of the opponent. The objective of the campaign is the moral and ethical growth of the whole society, including the opponent, and not mere short-term advantages. Thus satyagraha recreates and regenerates a disintegrating society by making it move upward to a higher level of human existence.

Fourthly, satyagraha aims at *concrete actions* for the immediate removal of the evils besetting society: the boycott of foreign goods,

21. *CW*, Vol. 29, p. 92.

picketing, the avoidance of alcoholic liquor, fasting, the distribution of literature that explains and instils moral values and exposes every aspect of the unjust system of the opponent, etc. Through these positive actions an effort is made to focus on truth and to lead people to an adherence to it, a real act of faith in the power of truth. An awareness is thus created in the collective consciousness of the enormity of the evil operative in society and of the necessity of removing it and replacing it with a new social order that will enrich and elevate human dignity.

Fifthly, satyagraha or truth-praxis reintroduces God into a Godless political life. A state that ignores its sacred oath to live and operate on the basis of justice and the equality of all before the law, rejects truth, and Truth is God. A trading community that thrives on deception, fraud and exploitation rejects God in actual practice, because truth is set aside, and Truth is God A caste or class that grows and lives at the expense of other castes or classes is also flouting eternal values and principles in its actual praxis. A nation that subjugates and exploits another nation or people is engaged in the colossal work of atheism by its elimination of true values. For Gandhi satyagraha is the operationalisation of the relative truth in concrete by resisting these evils. Relative truth is the doorway to the Absolute Truth Therefore, satyagraha or the truth-campaign is the affirmation of the Absolute in the concreteness of daily deliberations, decisions and the transactions of man in society

Sixthly, satyagraha upholds and propagates the most precious of human values· sacrificial love. Voluntary suffering is an essential element of satyagraha The repudiation of evil is a painful and humiliating process for the opponent The Truth in him is concealed and engulfed in his self-centred and self-dominated practices The satyagrahi voluntarily and out of love for the opponent, undertakes to take upon himself the pain which the opponent should have endured in the process of uncovering the truth or value in question Fasting is one such exercise in accepting suffering in order the uncover the truth in the other It is also an act of purification because untruth in action has polluted society. It is an affirmation of love for the other, even for the enemy Gandhi said "It will be time to fight when we have done enough *tapasya*."[22]

Seventhly, satyagraha is a concrete expression of the belief in the existence and value of the transcendent principle in man: the soul.

22 *Harijan*, 19 Dec 1936.

The tyrant may oppress, subjugate, torture and mutilate the body, but he has no control or power over the soul. This remains unconquered and unbeaten. It re-awakens its inner force and asserts its power, without bitterness, without anger or hatred or retaliation, through *satyagraha*. The modern erosion of values can be countered only on the basis of practicing these fundamental values.

Finally, satyagraha radiates genuine humility. Truth is humility and humility is truth. Actions and values speak for themselves. The actual worth of the cause manifests itself. This conviction enables the satyagrahi to acknowledge truth wherever and whenever it is met. This paves the way for a meaningful exchange and dialogue between the conflicting groups or classes. Compromise is an odious term in common parlance. But for Gandhi compromise is a sign of the reign of truth. For no one has the complete mastery or full perception of truth. Partial truth may be present even in the opponent. The recognition of this fact enables the satyagrahi to accept whatever is in accordance with the demands of truth, and reject whatever is perceived to be contrary to it Thus if one finds that one's judgment is proven wrong, it is one's duty to acknowledge this, repent of it and even do penance. On several occasions Gandhiji withdrew his satyagraha and took to fast and penance because he found that he had either miscalculated the mood of the people or acted upon a wrong assessment of the situation, and therefore violence had broken out.

Such a humility invites the opponent to change his own views or positions. The objective of satyagraha is a change of heart. When star-wars, nuclear bombs, ballistic missiles, diplomatic pressures and manoeuvres are used to force one view or policy on others and to gain strategic advantages or economic concessions, the satyagraha method may appear as the weapon of the weak. Gandhi denied this. Satyagraha is the weapon of the strong. Only the morally weak, whose cause is indefensible before the court of human conscience, resort to physical force, the use of arms, and such methods Today, looking at the international scene, one is emboldened to suggest that large movements are afoot which are but variations of the Gandhian method. They hope to restore sanity in international relations and avoid the total destruction of the planet.

b. Ahimsa

When knocked down to the ground and kicked on his face by the white policeman, Gandhi refused to hit back in anger. Pushed out

of the first class compartment by the unjust behaviour of a railway officer, he refused to retaliate. Insulted and abused by the white stagecoach driver on his way to Transvaal, he took the offence with patience and a certain defiance, but not revenge. When the agitating crowd lost its self-control and indulged in violence to property and life, Gandhi withdrew the satyagraha, and imposed upon himself a fast — to expiate for the sin. These instances speak to us of Gandhi's praxis of ahimsa. All his utterances and elaborations on ahimsa came only after he himself had practised it.

Gandhi insisted on overcoming violence by non-violence. The negative meaning of non-violence is avoidance of injury to any one. But he intended the positive meaning, which is active love for all. The basis of this universal love for every one and everything is the spiritual oneness of all beings. Thus non-violence implies affection, sympathy, mercy, generosity, service and even self-sacrifice.[23] Ahimsa is the widest love, the greatest charity for all creatures, including one's enemy.

For Gandhi, ahimsa is the means to realise and actualise truth. It is truth and love in action. "Ahimsa is the means, truth is the end."[24] The following reflections spell out the nature and role of non-violence as a concrete form of love or truth-praxis.

Firstly, non-violence rejects not only physical but also mental violence· one has to think, speak and act non-violently,[25] even under the gravest provocation.

Secondly, non-violence has the potential to restructure the present society and re-order the value systems operative in a consumeristic society. Gandhi says that "where there is possessiveness there is violence."[26] Greed leads to possessiveness. Competition and profiteering are the outcome of these centripetal tendencies in the individual When given organised and structured form, this trend leads to systematic violence and oppression, exploitation and injustice. Non-violence thus is non-possessiveness in action.

Thirdly, such a concept of non-violence leads to an economic praxis based on what Gandhi called trusteeship. It calls for the social utilisation of privately owned resources like the land and other economic means. Participation, collaboration and the widest possible service of the people are central to the concept of trusteeship.

23 Abid Hussain, *The Way of Gandhi and Nehru*, p 14
24 Prabhu, *Truth is God*, p 31
25 *Harijan*, 19 Dec 1936
26 *CW*, Vol. 32, p. 115.

c. Other Forms of Truth-Praxis

It was Gandhi's firm conviction that dependence upon others, especially in the field of economics, is a form of evil and untruth. To counteract this Gandhi experimented with a new social ordering. The first step to overthrow the domination of others was the awakening of the individuals and the nation to the situation. This he did by the propagation of *khadi*, the village industry, the idea of bread-labour — all concrete steps initiated by Gandhi to promote self-help and to realise the objective of *swaraj through swadeshi* ("independence through home marketing"). Each individual or family, he taught, should be able to produce by their own labour enough food and cloth and the other essential items. The same principle should be operative at the village, district and state levels. To realise this ideal Gandhi introduced a great revolutionary symbol: the *spinning wheel*. "Today Rama dwells in the spinning wheel", he said, and "God always reveals himself to us in some concrete shape."[27] For Gandhi it was clear that such concrete actions as spinning one's yarn and producing one's cloth would liberate people, and that through them the great God-realization had to take place. Manual labour, village service and other activities oriented to the welfare of others are also the means for this end. One's economic well-being and freedom are thus connected with the societal freedom and happiness. These are the signs or the partial realisation of ultimate Liberation.

Sarvadharma samabhavana; Religious Pluralism in Praxis

Gandhiji was struck down by the assassin's bullets when he was in the midst of the crowd that had assembled on the lawns of the Birla house for the regular Friday evening prayer. At those sessions Gandhi would read and explain passages from the various scriptures. This was his way of *practicing* an ideal he treasured. He believed in the unity of all religions in spite of their diversity. He had supported the Khilafat movement and made bold offers to the Muslim League when he saw in them a danger of alienation. He fasted when communal riots raged in cities and villages. Finally he declared a fast unto death when the riots remained unabated. All these actions were based on his conviction that in spite of differences at certain levels, the fundamental truth of all great religions of the world is to be accepted because they all are God-given and necessary for the particular people to whom they are revealed.[28]

27. *Ibid.*, p. 439.

From such concrete practices as mentioned above the following beneficial outcome can be shown:

Firstly, although at the time of Gandhi and even today, communal violence takes place, yet because of the Gandhian praxis the nation has acquired enough ethico-moral power and resources to be able to heal the wounds caused by such violence and to absorb the shock. This can be safely attributed to the pedagogy evolved by Gandhi.

Secondly, the so-called secular character of the Indian Constitution can be attributed to the impact of Gandhian praxis upon the nation.

Thirdly, India's own contribution to the international community, namely the non-alignment movement, is a further result of the Gandhian principle of *sarvadharma samabhavana*. In spite of differences, nations can dialogue, live in peaceful co-existence and move on. This is what is implied in NAM.

Finally, the practice of Gandhi has created among the various religions of the country an awareness of the possibility of an interaction among them. From this point of view, India may be seen as a kind of laboratory where the interaction among the many religions flourishing here may determine their future inter-relations elsewhere.

Gandhian Praxis, the "Inner Voice" and Scripture

There is an inseparable link between the Gandhian praxis and what Gandhi called "the small inner voice". He attributed all his decisions and insights to the voice from within, which was for him the voice of Truth, the voice of conscience, or the voice of God. Important events in his life were guided by that voice. Most of the fasts undertaken to bring about peace among Hindus and Muslims, or achieve freedom for the nation, were in obedience to that inner voice. It came to him distinctly and was irresistible

There is also a link between the inner voice and the voice of the people. On the occasion of the Champaran satyagraha, Gandhi had the opportunity to meet large crowds of poor peasants oppressed by the indigo-planters and by the government officials. After meeting the crowd Gandhi wrote the follwing: "It is no exaggeration, but the literal truth, to say that in this meeting with the peasants I was face to face

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28 V. B KHER (ed), *In Search of the Supreme*, Vol III, Ahmedabad, Navajivan Publishing House, 1962, p 3

with God, Ahimsa and Truth".[29] He was convinced that though the people could not assert their rights, and were mere silent sufferers, only expressing their agony, yet God was present with them and spoke to Gandhi. He saw God in the people. The praxis of service led him to the vision of God among the people, a God who was manifesting Himself in a very concrete way.

Commitment to truth and involvement with the current problems of the people bring us close to the face of God and enable us to hear His voice. Therefore Gandhi had his own view of the authority of Scriptures: ".. I would reject all scriptural authority if it is in conflict with sober reason or the dicates of the heart."[30] Reason sanctified by the still, small voice within, was his criterion for accepting even scriptural assertions.

Gandhi is here taking a significant stand with regard to the authority of the scriptures which are normative for the people. It looks as though Gandhi reduces them to records of the valuable experiences of those who have already traversed the path. Their life experience is reflected in these scriptures. For Gandhi what is valuable in them is not that they are normative for the present day travellers, but that they inspire us to undertake our own journey, wage our life-struggles. Faced as we are with our own contemporary problems, guided by our own conscience and the signs of contemporary events, God speaks to our generation. Events face us and we respond to them, guided by the 'inner voice' which is the voice of Truth, and our action leads to further insights. Thus *doing* the truth in the service of the people constitutes a channel of divine communication

The Gandhian method or praxis can be summarised and re-stated as follows. In order to fight against all forms of untruth Gandhi took the vow of Truth. He lived simply in order to fight against consumerism and all the evils associated with it. He divested himself of all extra clothes and wore one simple dhoti because he wanted to identify himself with the vast majority of India who are poor. He fasted and did penance in order that violence committed by others may be condoned, reparation made, and Truth vindicated. He admitted Harijans into his ashram and started the Harijan Seva Sangh in order to expiate the injustices committed against them for ages. Through these and similar *actions* Gandhi introduced a new methodology and a new pedagogy in India: *praxis* Praxis should precede proclamation.

29. GANDHI, *The Story*, p. 375.
30. *Young India*, 8 Dec. 1920.

Values, one may note, are best communicated by action and by interaction, and not by mere verbal communication. Possibly the most significant contribution of Gandhi to the culture of our times is the fact that humanity felt enriched and ennobled by his life and thus the value of the human person was raised to a higher level.

Concluding Remarks

The present brief study is written in the context of the emerging trends in Indian theology. Its relevance to modern theology can be shown from the following considerations.

Modern biblical studies have contributed to an increasing acceptance that revelation is not a mere communication of truths, but an event. Revelation is seen as an event through which God makes Himself and His plan for history known to us. "Truth *happens* when the words are spoken or read, and understood "[31] Therefore, there exists a vital link between revelation and sacred history. Recent trends in theology are a direct consequence of this understanding of revelation.

Along with that a new development has been taking shape, the Latin American struggle against oppression, foreign economic and political domination, and injustice A new interpretation of Christianity has taken place along with that struggle. Participation in these struggles has been regarded as an essential aspect of the Christian response to God's word. Modern human sciences began to be introduced into this process of rediscovering the authentic Christian life. In this context the term *praxis* came to figure prominently in the new theological vocabulary.

Indian theology will be born from the Christian response to the Indian situation In the case of Gandhi, a striking synthesis of the several traditions of Indian and world religions has taken place. Probably the most striking feature in this synthesis is the role of *praxis*. Social transformation will take place when moral values are applied to life situations. Doing is the first step in theologising.

31. William REISER, *What are They Saying about Dogma ?*, New York, Paulist Press, 1978, p. 44. Emphasis added.

"Veni Pater Pauperum"

Some notes on the liberation of theology

Marianne KATOPPO*

LATELY, the theology of liberation has come under attack. As a feminist theologian — feminist theology usually being classified within the broader stream of liberation theology — I felt it would be useful to present some notes on the liberation of theology.

We need to take some facts into consideration. The first is that the "theology of liberation" need not necessarily be *only* that which is covered by the document *Instruction on Certain Aspects of the "Theology of Liberation"* which the S. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued in August 1984. I have studied this document carefully, and nowhere in its eleven chapters, or the introduction or conclusion, did I find anything pertinent to feminist theology, black theology, Asian theology, and a few other theologies which come in the same category of liberation theology as *we* ourselves (i.e. women, blacks, Asians) understand it.

So, then, for me as an Asian feminist theologian, liberation theology is concerned with the liberation *of* theology itself. For too long Christians have subscribed to what is sometimes called the *North Atlantic Charter* — Rome, Geneva and Boston — and meekly accepted the dominance of theologies formulated there, while obediently adapting our thought-patterns and ways of worship to whatever was prescribed or proscribed by our North Atlantic brethren. I use the word "*brethren*" deliberately, because for thousands of years it was mainly *men* who did the theologising, and women's reflections on their personal encounter with God (which is, after all, what theology is supposed to be about) was trivialised or ridiculed. My personal opinion is that we

*Marianne KATOPPO, is an Indonesian Protestant theologian at present the Dorothy Cadbury Fellow at Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham, U.K. A member of the Executive Board of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia and Indonesian Coordinator of EATWOT, she mostly works outside church structures as a writer, educator and social critic. An earlier version of this article appeared in Indonesian in *Sinar Harapan*, Jakarta, Nov 2, 1984, and in English in *The Jakarta Post*, Nov. 14, 1984.

desperately need a theology which is liberated from this narrow Western male perspective.

By 1987, the majority of the Christians will live in the Third World. Does it not make sense then, that those in the Third World be considered mature enough to formulate their own theology? "We drink from our own wells," as Gustavo Gutierrez, the Peruvian diocesan priest who first used the term "theology of liberation", put it.

It is very interesting to note how much publicity was given to the Vatican document which was published three days before Leonardo Boff was officially questioned (the term used was actually "colloquium", "talking together") by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in Rome. Less publicity was given to the fact that the Brasilian National Bishops Conference attended by 358 bishops issued a statement which cautioned against "the alarm which surrounds the release of the document." In other words, the Brasilian bishops supported Boff. And almost no publicity was given to the statement signed by 104 West European theologians (including eminent scholars like Käsemann, Moltmann, Metz, Solle) urging the churches to safeguard the freedom to theologise in one's own cultural and social context. In other words, supporting Boff and Gutiérrez.

Gutiérrez was also called to Rome in a surprise move by the Vatican, who made use of the Peruvian bishops' *ad limina* visit to question him. He did not get such unanimous support from his countrymen as Boff did: 18 bishops voted for, 18 bishops against, and 7 abstained. But this can be considered a "victory" in the ecclesiastical context of his country. I also want to note here that very little publicity is given to the fact that, a few weeks before his death, the eminent German Jesuit Karl Rahner, wrote a personal letter to the Cardinal Archbishop of Lima in support of Gutiérrez.

All the publicity surrounding the Vatican document, Boff and Gutiérrez, creates an unfortunate situation, namely one tends to become reactive, rather than creative, limiting one's scope to that — or those — aspect(s) being criticised

As I stated above, liberation theology is more than the Latin American theology of which Boff and Gutiérrez are the main exponents In my view, liberation theology includes: Asian/African theology, as opposed to European/American; women's (or feminist) theology, as a counter-culture to the monolithic patriarchal church, black theology, from the perspective of the black Americans; and the theology of the poor, as over against the theology of the very affluent "moral majority."

The true liberation of theology will have taken place when all these theologies have been fully accepted as authentic expressions of faith, and not summarily rejected simply because they do not conform to the ideas and expectations of a certain group.

One might be inclined to view the recent controversy on liberation theology as something which affects only those who pledge allegiance to the Bishop of Rome. Not so. The Vatican "Instruction" has repercussions also in other spheres, especially when seen in the context of the attacks on *Orbis Books*, the Maryknoll publisher. Dark spectres of the Inquisition and of a reintroduction of the Index rise from their medieval graves to haunt us.

An international group of theologians and church workers meeting in Cartigny, Switzerland, in October 1984 was concerned to the extent of writing a joint letter to Arno Held the Moderator of the General Committee of the World Council of Churches. In this letter, they appealed to the WCC "to continue to uphold and defend the right to do independent theological research and writing, in accordance with one's own cultural and social context," as had indeed been stipulated in the WCC's Programme for Theological Education and the General Committee's earlier meetings.

This letter was signed by 56 women and men, including Philip Potter, outgoing Secretary General of the WCC, in whose honour the group had convened. Also, His Holiness Karekin II (Primate of the Armenian Church), Robert McAfee Brown (USA), José Miguez Bonino (Argentine), Metropolitan Geevarghese Mar Ostathios (India), Kosuke Koyama (Japan), Mary John Mananzan OSB (Philippines), Catharina Halkes (Netherlands), Wesley Ariarajah (Sri Lanka), Julio de Santa Ana (Uruguay), and many others, including this writer.

Having read some of Boff's and Gutiérrez' writings, I can only say that a very real concern for the poor emerges from them. This concern is expressed by Boff especially in his book *The Lord's Prayer*, and by Gutiérrez in his exposition on Mary's Magnificat. Both themes are most biblical, and never did I see any attempts being made to "making this (political) dimension the principal or exclusive component... (leading) to a reductionist reading of the Bible," (*Instruction*: X: 5).

Frankly, in my Protestant ignorance, I am puzzled. If it is a mistake to bring attention to a political dimension of the readings of the Scriptures, and this is "reductionist", how then does one justify the existence of the Vatican State ? Why is it alright for the Pope to

The Meaning of Priesthood for Me

(a homily by a new priest)

I hope you wouldn't mind if I am a bit autobiographical in sharing what priesthood means to me. What I want to share with you is based on my experience during the last two months. Anything I say about an earlier period will be theory; about future, speculation. In contrast, the last two months have had hard core experience for me, on which I have reflected and from which I have learned.

When I left the Seminary on April, 12th, I knew I would be going straight home and I would have to do a lot of work at home arranging for my ordination, since my brother, the only other male member in my family, would not be able to reach home early enough to make the arrangements. (My father died 18 years ago. And today happens to be the anniversary of his death). But what I was not prepared for was the kind of mess that I encountered at home. I was faced with a half-finished building, a police case, workers who had swindled money and refused to work, and relatives who kept away. I saw human beings at their worst — workers and business men who made an extra buck on us, relatives and neighbours who preferred to be scandalmongers than helping hands. And as though not to let us down absolutely, one or two with genuine sympathy and understanding.

Providentially, I felt strong enough to take it on. It meant a lot of hard work, running around, looking for workers, cajoling them, paying them an extra note, and often doing the work by ourselves. A week of such a presence made a difference. I found more and more people coming forward to help, even strangers walking in to put in a word of advice, an offer of help. Even those who were antagonistic, for one reason or other, neighbours, friends, relatives, seemed to thaw. (And those days brought in the first conflict in my understanding of the priesthood with that of the people: people could not imagine a priest-to-be-in-a-few-days, carrying mud on his head !)

On May 5th as I walked into the packed church and to the beautifully decorated altar to be ordained, I carried along the supreme joy of my mother who struggled all alone for 18 years, of my ageing grandparents, the intense sorrow of my brother who could not be present there, the longing of two cancer patients on their death beds, who hoped that my first Eucharist would heal them, the malice and greed of workers who cheated us; the sympathy and genuineness of those who helped us. In the church we had warring families, who had been fighting court cases for years, coming all together under the same roof probably for

the first time in a decade. There were friends, relatives and even uninvited guests who knew we would like to have them there. And all with a sense of solidarity and willingness to put in their mite to make this ordination ceremony a success.

And to me today those two months recapitulate the meaning of priesthood ! Priesthood as a presence

in a world of inhumanity, jealousy, competition,
intolerance and sheer malice — a world of sin
intertwined with rays of sympathy, hope and humanity;

a presence that does not impose itself,
a presence that witnesses,

that invites to new vistas of living,
that eases and brings together even the irreconcilable,
that consoles and lightens.

To me the priest is someone

who takes to the altar
the intense pain and agony of his people,
the tremendous longing and hope,
the good and evil that vie with each other.

To me the priest is an onlooker

even as hope is shattered
still hoping to hope.

M.K.G.

Continued from p. 536

This informative introduction covers many areas The required information is given about the book of her Foundations — the oral style of the book written to "entertain her sisters", the protagonists, namely, God and the Devil, their origins and the manuscripts used for the translation However, the major function of the introduction is to enable the reader to enter the historical, cultural and religious world of Teresa so as to grasp "the drama of deep and practical spirituality that lies beneath the surface of the lines". This volume indicates that the introductions to the three volumes are complementary, yet this introduction is adequate in itself for this volume. We judge the long historical introduction to be a real treasure. There are also short introductions to the other minor works

We recommend this translation to anyone thinking of buying Teresa' complete works. This paperback edition is reasonably priced, $ 21 for the three volumes. The binding is solid, the book opens easily, the print is clear. We do not know whether there is a hard back edition.

P. M. MEAGHER, S.J.

Apostolic Formation for Women Religious. Select reprints from the Bulletins of the International Union of Superiors General (Women) Rome from 1979-1983 (Book 2) *Bangalore, Asia Trading Corporation*, 1985. Pp iv-272. Rs. 45 00

The book is exactly what it claims to be a book on apostolic formation for religious. It is a collection of articles dealing with the different aspects of religious formation The titles of the articles such as "Jesus forms his Disciples", "The Evangelical Counsels", "Admission and Formation in the New Code", "Implementing the Objectives of each Stage of Formation Process", "The Major Challenges to Women Religious Today", "The Future of Religious Life", provide a bird's eye view of the contents of the book. The biblical foundation for apostolic formation, initial formation, evangelical counsels, on-going formation, psychological problems of young religious ... are dealt with in detail. This is a very valuable book for all those who are involved in the formation of religious both men and women.

S. FRANCIS, S.J.

Book Reviews

Biblical Theology and History

Easter in Durham. Bishop Jenkins and the Resurrection of Jesus By Murray J. HARRIS. *Exeter, Paternoster Press*, 1985. Pp. 32. 85 pence.

The Bishop of Durham, Dr Jenkins, in his writings since 1965 and as a Bishop has aroused great controversy in a number of BBC TV programmes because of his questionable understanding of the Resurrection

The present booklet is apologetic in the good sense of the word The author, Warden of Tyndale House, Cambridge, has allowed the Bishop to speak for himself, quoting at length and, I judge, fairly from his writings and interviews He evaluates the various aspects of the Bishop's thought and indicates in a creative way how this thought fundamentally disagrees with the basic biblical evidence, at the same time underlining the positive elements in his position

The fundamental point is whether the resurrection was, before all else, a personal experience of Jesus himself who was bodily raised and exalted to God's right hand to live in a new personal way Only then are we able to speak about the faith of the disciples in a living Jesus, the Church as the Body of Christ and the effects of the resurrection in the lives of the believers

We judge that Harris' interpretation of the evidence of the NT is sound, though we would pay more attention to literary forms and the type of words used to describe the resurrection Dr Jenkin's thought does not agree with the NT nor with the early creeds and the perennial Christian faith The author is dispassionate, courteous and honestly critical The booklet could be valuable as the Bishop's views have been positively accepted in England by many Christians, and so indicate an understanding probably found also among Christians in India, though not articulated

P M. MEAGHER, S J

La Pâque du Christ Mystère de Salut. Mélanges offers au P. Francois-Xavier Durrwell Edited by M. BENZERATH, A. SCHMID & J. GUILLET. *Paris Les éditions du Cerf*, 1982 Pp. 315. 11 FF

Among the many biblical theologians, one man who deserves to be honoured with a memorial volume is Fr Durrwell whose book, *La Resurrection de Jesus. Mystère du Salut. Étude Biblique*, appeared in 1950 and has gone through 9 editions It was entirely reworked in 1976. This has been translated into many languages and has had a very wide reading public in its English edition *The Resurrection A Biblical Study* This book has had a major impact on the contemporary life of the Christian churches

The present book honours Fr Durrwell on his 70th birthday The collection of studies relates in one way or another to the resurrection of Jesus The list of contributors contains well-known scholars like Charpentier, Cothenet, Dupont, Grelot, Lambrecht, Pesch, Vogels and others The studies cover many parts of the NT with an initial essay on the Passover in the OT, and the intertestamental tradition The final essay studies the salvific role of the passion and death of Jesus and their relationship to the resurrection in Ireneus of Lyons The following scriptual texts are studied Mk 10.45 in the light of the OT, "The crucified, he is risen" Mk 16·6a; the structure of Mk 14-16; Lk 9·26 and the relationship between the Transfiguration and the Parousia, the Emmaus narrative Lk 24.13-35 (two studies) and this incident compared with the narrative of the Ethiopian Officer Acts 8 26-40, the Lord's Supper 1 Cor 11 20, 2 Cor 5 4c, the salvific role of the resurrection in 1 Peter, and finally the imminence of the Kingdom of God in Mk 1.14-15, 4:11, 9·1. There are two other general essays, one on the Word of God as nourishment and an important study of the origin of the faith in the resurrection of Jesus: in this Pesch suggests the importance of the sayings of Jesus about the coming of the Son

of Man together with the actual experience of Jesus as the glorified Son of Man as the origin of the faith in his resurrection. The editor has also included a short talk from a retreat given by Durrwell in which he narrates the history of his own fundamental insight.

In the introduction Guillet has gathered the studies under three headings which accord with the three major aspects of Durrwell's thought: a. the Paschal mystery is the personal drama and mystery of the life of Christ himself; b. salvation is shared with others only through their communion with Christ in his Paschal mystery; c the full Paschal mystery contains within itself the definitive and ultimate salvation in all its aspects.

We shall comment on some of the more striking studies In his study of Mk 16·6 Kahmann has emphasized the significance of "Jesus of Nazareth, the *crucified*, he is risen", and therefore the core of the resurrection appearance and a central Marcan theme The short study of Lk 24·13-35 from a literary perspective under the categories of "conjunction and disjunction" is insightful In the longer study of this same narrative Dupont surveys and evaluates the various ways the text has been seen, especialy the symmetrical structure of the text and its centre, on the basis of lexical data and narrative structure. His own use of Aristotle's analysis of dramatic composition is enlightening and underlines the central and climactic role of the scene of recognition at the "breaking of the bread" Lambrecht's careful article on 2 Cor 5 4c highlights the similarity of thought in 1 Cor 15.53-54 and the probable Christological reference in the phrase "by life" and Paul's holistic idea of the resurrection Cothenet underlines the place of the resurrection in 1 Peter as the source of regeneration and hope In the exhortative part of 1 Peter, in the face of suffering, Cothenet indicates also the role played by the idea of the community as the Temple of God

I found study of the Lord's Supper by Grelot excellent He insists on the fact that Christ, the risen Lord, is present in the Host and invites the Church to his meal so as to unite the Church with himself, her risen Lord, and her members among themselves. He indicates the importance of the strict relationship between Christ, the words of the historical Jesus, and the central words of the Eucharist In the light of the fact that the Eucharist is the risen Lord's supper, he reflects upon the insufficiency of the theological traditions about the real presence and the emphasis on sacrifice, and the theological and liturgical questions regarding the presidency at the Eucharist, liturgical innovation, and the use of bread and wine. His final reflections are about the nature of the obligation to human solidarity which arises from the union of the community with the risen Lord.

The quality of the book makes it a worthy memorial and an expression of appreciation of a great man.

P. M. MEAGHER, S.J.

New Testament and Mythology and Other Basic Writings. By Rudolf BULTMANN Selected, edited, and translated by Schubert M. Ogden. *London, SCM Press*, 1985 Pp. x-168. £ 7 95

The book contains seven essays arranged in the chronological order of publication Directly connected with the title essay on "New Testament and Mythology" (1941) are three essays: "The Problem of Hermeneutics" (1950); "On the Problem of Demythologizing" (1952), and again. "On the Problem of Demythologizing" (1961). Together with these are three minor essays on "Theology as Science" (1941); "Science and Existence" (1955), and "Is Exegesis without Presuppositions Possible?" (1957)

A glance at the main biblical and theological journals, mainly of those years, shows that the title essay has been one of the most discussed and controversial theological writings of the century Bultmann's contention is that the world picture of the NT is a mythical world picture, and to this world picture corresponds the presentation of the salvation occurrence which constitutes the real content of the NT proclamation. Now that our thinking is irrevocably formed by science, it is impossible to "repristinate a past world picture." Picking and choosing in this mythical world picture leads nowhere, only one thing is to be done, viz. to demythologize "The real point of myth is not to give an objective world picture, what is expressed in it, rather, is how we human beings understand ourselves in our world Thus, myth does not want to be interpreted in cosmological terms but in anthropological terms — or, better, in existentialist terms" (p. 9). Bultmann returns to this point in his essay "On the Problem of Demythologizing" (1952): "Demythologizing interpretation seeks

through its criticism to bring out the real intention of the biblical writings. It sees that we cannot talk about God or what transcends the world as it is 'in itself', because in doing so we would objectify God or the transcendent into an immanent, worldly phenomenon" (p. 99). Bultmann notes that in many cases we demythologize unintentionally, without reflecting, "but those of us who have to interpret scripture responsibly ought to be conscious of what we are doing and to remind ourselves that honesty at this point requires us to be radical (p. 101)

Radical, Bultmann has been n all honesty. Examining the Christ occurrence, he faces the problem that in Christ the mythical and the historical are peculiarly intertwined, viz. Jesus is both Son of God and a historical person whose destiny ends with crucifixion, "but alongside of the historical event of the cross stands the resurrection which is not a historical event" (p 32) The main question is about the cross and resurrection as a unity Summarizing at the risk of oversimplifying one might say that the crucifixion of the Son of God who became man, his sacrifice or the expiation of our sins, are all elements which have no other bearing but to express the historical and eschatological importance *for us*, as we come to understand them by faith. The cross and the resurrection are essentially an eschatological event, not an event of the past but of the future, and, as such, a saving event Bultmann insists that the cross is not a saving event because it is the cross of Christ, rather it is the cross of Christ because it is a saving event Apart from this, it means only the tragic end of a generous man What matters is the saving meaning of the cross. We believe in it because of the Word of God which we hear in the proclamation Faith is not blind or arbitrary. We say yes or no intelligently. "Such understanding faith in the word of proclamation is the genuine faith of Easter .. The event of Easter in so far as it can be referred to as a historical event alongside of the cross, is nothing other than the emergence of faith in the risen one in which the proclamation has its origin" (p 39) The resurrection signifies God's action by which the salvific event of the cross takes place; this is the object of faith "In fact cross and resurrection are a unity as 'cosmic' occurrence . through which the world is judged and the possibility of genuine life is created" (p. 36f)

The other three essays are shorter and simpler. — In the essay "Is Exegesis Without Presuppositions Possible?" (1957) Bultmann begins by clearly stating the question: "The question whether exegesis without presuppositions is possible must be answered affirmatively if 'without presuppositions' means 'without presupposing the results of exegesis'. In this sense, exegesis without presuppositions is not only possible but imperative. In another sense, however, no exegesis is without presuppositions, because the exegete is not a *tabula rasa* but approaches texts with specific questions or with a specific way of asking questions and thus has a certain idea of the subject matter with which the text is concerned" (p. 145). Even the method of historical-critical research which the exegete uses unavoidably contains a certain 'preunderstanding' However, this preunderstanding is not closed but open, so that there can be an existential encounter with the text and an existential decision. Further, we should note that understanding the text is never definitive but rather remains open because the meaning of scripture discloses itself anew in every future. "Because the exegete exists historically and must hear the word of scripture as spoken to his or her special historical situation, he or she will understand the old word ever anew. Ever anew it will make clear who we are and who God is, and the exegete will have to express this in an ever new conceptuality. Thus, it is true even of scripture that it is what it is only with its history and its future" (p 152).

The book ends with a good index of names and subjects. The educated English reader will be grateful to the translator-editor for making these essays available which otherwise may not easily be accessible, especially those parts which up till now were still unpublished These essays represent either a clarification of Bultmann's views or a development of his approach to Scripture and theology, during twenty years of his scholarly career. Prof Ogden has published formerly a similar selection of Bultmann's minor writings, under the title *Existence and Faith* (London, Collins, 1964 and 1973).

J. VOLCKAERT, S J.

A History of Israel. From the Beginnings to the Bar Kochba Revolt, AD 135 By J. Alberto SOGGIN. *London, SCM Press* 1985. Pp. xviii, 436. £ 10 50.

There are a number of classical histories of Israel in English. Among these we may mention the books by Albright (19[illegible]), Bright (1981, 3rd ed.), de Vaux (ET 1978), Noth (ET 1959, 2nd ed), Ricciotti (ET 1955). There are also three more recent studies: J. M. Hayes and J. M. Miller (eds.) *Israelite and Judean History* (1977); S. Hermann, *A History of Israel in Old Testament* (ET 1981, 2nd ed) and H. Jagersma, *A History of Israel in the Old Testament Period* (1979, ET 1982).

The last years have witnessed this renewed interest in Israel's history because of archeological data available and more so because of the actual study of the text of the OT itself, and the questions raised about methodology and the new attempts to understand the early "history" of Israel prior to the Davidic period.

One major characteristic of the present study is the author's attitude to the whole period prior to the reign of David. The author questions the historical nature of the evidence available in the OT texts and the value of the remnants of historical data to be found in these texts to construct a real pre-monarchical history. The author, and many others who share this attitude, do not question the religious value of these early texts, but rather their witness to factual data going back to the pre-Davidic period.

The study begins with a description of the territory of Israel's history. The author then surveys the prior studies and evaluates each from point of view of method, attitude to source and content. He describes his method, surveys the sources available and evaluates them. In the light of his evaluation of the sources he studies the first historical period of Israel, namely, the reigns of David and Solomon. He is responsible for this period also in the collection of studies edited by Hayes and Miller.

In the second part the author returns to the "Traditions about the Proto-History of the People", namely the period from the Patriarchs to the Judges. This period is treated in four chapters which turn to be the more enlightening and challenging, or disconcerting, chapters of the book. We judge Soggin justifies his basic stance and the way he questions the "histories" of this period. The study of these long years also throws light on the nature of the biblical text and could serve as an education in much of recent biblical study of a large portion of the OT.

In the next part three chapters are devoted to the tragic history of the Monarchy from the Division to the Exile under a general heading of "A House Divided". The problem of the chronology of the kings of Judah and Israel is treated by H. Tadmor in a 16-page appendix. He covers this complicated problem and the attendant literature with competent clarity.

The history of the people of Israel after the Exile is a prolonged period of foreign domination by Eastern and Western Empires. We follow Israel through this period up to Emperor Hadrian (117-138) and the Bar Kochba revolt, the destruction of the Temple and of the city of Jerusalem.

Soggin has included a further useful appendix of eleven pages by D. Conrad under the heading: "An Introduction to the Archaeology of Syria and Palestine on the Basis of the Israelite Settlement". There are 18 plates, mainly of archeological interest, attached to the History. The footnotes collected at the end of the text are brief and comparatively few. A general Index, an Index of Biblical References and an Index of modern Scholars, facilitate the use of this very rich and full history.

Some readers may at first be distracted by the fact that each paragraph of each chapter is numbered and the subsequent paragraphs of the same topic are numerically subdivided. These divisions are used for the purpose of cross reference. They make the book very useful because of the accumulated information which is made available and reduce the need for footnotes. Within each major part of the book, at the opening of chapters and within chapters, a reasonable amount of bibliographical material is given. However, much of it will be unavailable to many, because of the languages and the lack of technical books and reviews in libraries, at least in Asia and Africa. Fortunately the author has given the substance of the important writings and the opposing or differing opinions.

The author, a lecturer at the Rome University, a visiting professor at the Pontifical Biblical Institute, and a professor at the Waldensian Faculty of Rome, is a highly competent OT scholar. He is already known for his *Introduction to the Old Testament* (1980) and his commentaries on Joshua (1972) and Judges (1981). Of all recent histories, we would recomend this book and the studies edited by Hayes and Miller.

We have not given any detailed criticism or judgements on the author's choices in difficult questions, because of our own limitations in the area of the history of Israel. We think that the treatment of the period prior to the Monarchy is wise and a good counterbalance to the earlier studies based on the assumption that the sources at our disposal are able to provide abundant reliable material for that history.

P. M. MEAGHER, S.J.

Theology

Christ in a Changing World. Towards an Ethical Christology. By Tom F. DRIVER, *London, SCM Press*, 1981. Pp. xi-183. £ 5.95.

This is an interesting book which fairly sums up some of the latest trends in Christology. The basic contention of the book is that Christology and ethics are concomitantly inter-related; one does not follow the other. Traditionally, ethics has been viewed as something which flows out of Christological doctrines. Analysing historical facts the author shows that such a perception has been disastrous. Another false point of departure, according to the author, is giving the primacy to the Christ of the Scripture and tradition over the living encounter of believers with Christ in today's world. As he puts it, "the primary question is not who Christ was, who the disciples thought he was, but who Jesus is today?"

After the introductory remarks, the author devotes a whole chapter to a method for an Ethical Christology. First of all Christology, the whole of it, should be submitted to ethical judgement, that is, before formulating a Christological doctrine one must look for its socio-ethical consequences. Secondly, present-day Christology should have freedom from the past traditions. Thirdly, there must be a re-evaluation of titles like "Lord", 'High Priest', "King", "Savior" .., which are essentially terms of uniqueness. These titles basically seek obedience and not a relationship. Instead titles like "friend", "Rabbi", "Servant", 'brother' .. , need closer attention today. Fourthly, the Church should re-evaluate its teachings about the Jesus of Scripture and Jesus of history. Precedence should be given to the Christological event which takes place today. Finally, we should try to discern the present activity of Christ [illegible] terms ?).

The following three chapters are critiques of Christ as Centre, Model, or Norm; of Christ as Once for All; and of Biblicism. The author questions the view in which Christ who is at the edge of history and who brings in the Kingdom slowly, becomes the centre of history. The author calls this a "paradigm shift" from a Christ who ushers in the Kingdom of God to a Christ who is the fulfilment of the Kingdom, the eternal Logos, the Alpha and Omega. The author claims that Christ did not come as a norm, but as a participant in the Kingdom-genesis. Christian living, therefore, is an encounter and interaction of experience, reason, conscience and Christ. Such process will be a creative interpretation of what Christ intended two thousand years ago.

The author further questions that Christ is "once for all", saying that such a view is to imprison God in the likeness of Jesus. Who are we to say that God's infinite commitment to finitude will occur only once ? "Who are we to say that God is bound by what God has already done ?"

Attacking rigid Biblicism, the author points out that all the readers, interpreters, and churches have "a canon within the canon", a cluster of related parts that have for them more authority than the rest. Such an approach is prejudicial and undermines the concept of Biblicism.

The last three chapters are applications of the thinking of the author to ethical life. The first one, "Towards a Trinitarian Ethic", is a meaningful investigation into the doctrine of Trinity and Christian life. This gives very interesting and fresh thinking about the relevance of the doctrine of Trinity and its justification on psycho-epistemological grounds.

As a whole the book keeps the reader awake. These are not haphazard reflection of an amateur theologian. Written by a Protestant theologian, the book is a testament of passionate beliefs. His insistence on the co-relationship of Christistology and Ethics is a challenge to Christians, especially to theologians. His insights on the Trinity are a meaningful sequel to the thinking initiated by Raimundo Panikkar some time back. Simply to dismiss the book as unorthodox or a twentieth century revival of Arianism would be to be "unethical" to the author !

R. ATHICKAL, S.J.

[illegible] By Hans Küng. [illegible] Collins, [illegible] and Collins Fount Paperbacks, 1985. Pp. [illegible] (HB), 319 (PB). £ 9.95 (HB) £ [illegible] (PB).

The book is based on a series of lectures given by Hans Küng at Tübingen. In these lectures he is trying to answer the pressing question about eternal life not only from the theological point of view but also by listening to the views of poets and philosophers, doctors and scientists. The thought of the book is broadly divided into three sections. Each consists of three chapters and there is an epilogue which sums up the salient features about Christian faith in eternal life.

The first section describes the background of the question. The author analyses the problem as a whole from the standpoint of medicine, philosophy and the history of religion. The question of "eternal life" turns out to be a highly complex reality which can be formulated in a variety of alternatives. In their broadest significance they can reduced to: What awaits us after this life ? A complete extinction in nothingness or an eternal permanence in being ? This basic question, which decides the final meaning of man's dying and living, cannot be answered by the light of reason alone but has to be seen from the point of view of Christian faith.

The second section consists of biblically based lectures on heaven and hell. The first chapter in this section traces the gradual growth in the Jewish people's faith in the resurrection. The second chapter deals with the difficulties with the resurrection of Jesus and the implications of Jesus' resurrection today. The last chapter in this section deals with heaven and hell. The author keeps his feet firmly planted on the ground.

Three groups of ideas are to be found in the final section. The writer's purpose is to suggest implications and consequences of eternal life for the people of today. The first group of ideas starts from the problem of modern medicine and dwells on the individual dimension Küng reflects on ageing, dying, death and humanity's inescapable responsibility for itself. A second group of ideas starts from the problems of modern society. The author presents the sociological dimensions of the question in the light of the thought of Heine, Marx, Marcuse, and of the alternative movements. The third group of ideas starts out from both modern literature on the future and modern physics, and leads to [illegible] According to the [illegible] for us today [illegible] life is not to [illegible] problem of a life beyond but [illegible] work together with others now in a practice of life which takes its standard from Jesus the crucified.

At the end of each chapter a summary of the main points is provided, which allows one to easily follow the thought pattern of the author. Notes and an index are additional features of this valuable book. The author's breadth of knowledge and his insights into the different sciences of the contemporary world are astounding. This makes him one of the leading theologians of our time.

S. FRANCIS, S.J.

Hinduism

The Mahabharata. A Literary Study. By Krishna CHAITANYA. *New Delhi, Clarion Books,* 1985. Pp. xxxii462. Rs 175.

This is an impressive study of the Mahabharata as a whole, not only literary but also philosophical and theological. There are really few studies of the great Indian epic which venture beyond textual or historical questions.

The polymath winner of the New York "Critic of Ideas" award and author, among many other books, of a five-volume study of freedom, Kerala-born Mr K. K. Nair, writing under his usual penname Krishna Chaitanya, makes bold to present a major study, obviously the fruit of many readings and a long familiarity with the epic. Throughout the work KC stresses the artistic and theological genius of the author of Mahabharata, Krishna Dwaipayana, whom tradition calls Vyasa, and who, around the 2nd century B C., reshaped a mass of ancient literary material into a work of great power and insight. KC is aware, of course, that a number of passages of the epic hang loose on the story and must be treated as interpolations. But he thinks that these are not so many nor so important as earlier critics thought, and that the poem emerges with a unity of vision and philosophy that can only be explained by accepting that a man of genius is its authentic original author. Most importantly, KC presents the Gita, as forming an integral part of the epic so that the Gita cannot be really understood fully outside of

the Epic. Indeed the Gita is itself the hermeneutical key for the reading of the Mahabharata as a whole. Not surprisingly, therefore, about half our book is devoted to a study of the Gita.

For KC "this epic is a unique work which tried to discover, through art, what philosophical thinking and related modalities had tried to find out: how man can realize the greatest possible meaning, the maximum value, in his living, in the condition of incarnate existence" (p. 23). This can be done by the pursuit of the four goals of existence, *dharma*, *artha*, *kama*, *moksha*. "These are the hierarchically arranged goals of man outlined by prior thought and the epic explicity stages that it is in one respect the science of these goals. But the tremendous thrust of the libido, which isolates man and sets him against his brethren and nature, had to be grasped in its fulness and intensity with far greater understanding than in the rather bloodless speculations of philosophy Vyasa lays bare the structural violence that is deeply embedded in the life of the world, the role it plays in creating balances, before he proceeds to explore ways of securing harmony in less ruthless ways.. A comprehensively conscious artistic intelligence is behind the creation of this work" (23-4).

After giving us a summary of the story and the qualities of its poet, KC makes a literary analysis of some of the main characters, their strengths and weaknesses, their ambiguities and their roles in the story. The chapter on "A Triad of Great Women" (Draupadi, Kunti, Gandhari) is particularly attractive. The analysis of the characters leads to a study of the significance of "The Hidden Stakes that were Gambled" and of the Virata war as a "dress rehearsal" of the great war.

The significance of the epic, however, is not sought only at the level of the development of the story and its characters. It is to be found in the deeper analysis of human beings and their philosophical and theological problems. This explains the significance of the Gita on which the KC comments in a novel fashion The last part of the book faces squarely some of the great theological questions, such as "who is Krishna ?", What is the "Structure of Historical Existence", the role of men and the gods in history, the relation of ethics to aesthetics, and finally the meaning of moksha.

Throughout the work KC is in constant contact with Western thought and displays an amazing breadth of culture and a deep familiarity with thinkers of many different schools and disciples. He writes with ease and a sense of humour which he believes he discovers in the work of Vyasa. At times, however, his explanations are somewhat artificial, for instance, his explanation of the Pandava polyandry (145-6). Fastidious historians and text critics may frown at the work and question whether KC brings out what is actually in the epic. This is indeed not a textual study: it is an interpretation of the epic, of its deeper meaning, and of its significance for today. One may claim that different interpretations are possible This can surely be said of any work of theological hermeneutics.

G. Gispert-Sauch, S.J.

Hinduism. By V. C. Channa. *New Delhi, National Publishing House*, 1984. Pp. x-202. Rs. 90.

A young lecturer in the department of Anthropology of the University of Delhi, this second book of Dr Channa gives us a phenomenological study of Hinduism. As an introduction to the chapters on the gods of Hinduism, the first chapter analyses the "Principles of Divinity" in Hinduism, i.e. the special qualities that are taken to be hierophanous in the tradition. They are: dominance, continuity, growth or self-propagation, and giving or altruism. The author thinks that these explain why certain objects, places, animals or persons are taken as more "divine" than others. The following four chapters are merely a description of the more popular and pan-indian gods and goddesses, the prayers, the rituals and the festivals of Hinduism. Foreign readers will be grateful for the inclusion and translation of such popular devotional hymns as "Om Jaya Jagadisha Hare," etc. The last five chapters analyse some of the great operative principles of the tradition: dharma (purity and pollution), karma (*pun* and *pap*, hierarchy, inequality and altruism. The books includes a good number of pen drawings of the more popular divinities.

The style is simple, informal, somewhat chatty. One feels that the author expresses his own experience of the Hindu popular tradition and that he draws from that experience many of the stories he gives us Perhaps the danger is of presenting one particular form of the tradition as the universal Hindu form,

be it in festivals, in sacraments, prayers or other rituals. I would hesitate to say this book describes the popular religiosity of the country: it says almost nothing, for example, of the village goddesses and lower deities (Hanuman and Ganapati are of course there: but do they belong to the little or the great tradition?), of the sadhus and their internal organisation, or of the thousand and one ways of dealing with illness, misfortune and magic. The Hinduism described belongs, rather, to today's urban middle class.

By a simple description of the customs and manners and ways of thinking (one is reminded of l'abbé Dubois), the second half of the book contains implicitly a severe criticism of the Hindu tradition. A paragraph like the following need not itself express any ethical indignation to arouse the anger not only of the feminists but of all enlightened people: "To the woman, a husband is the object of her life. Being a wife and a mother is the end of her life, that is all she can possibly become. Marriage, in fact, is vitally important for her; it is also the avenue by which she can achieve her values of dress and adornment in which she rejoices and which are a source of great pleasure to her" (145) (sic!) The chapters dealing with hierarchy and inequality are likewise damaging. Other authors may find a more apologetic and better articulated presentation of the values of the Hindu tradition. Without passing any express judgement, Channa presents the reality, as he sees it. His courage is surely praiseworthy.

The editing of the book is poor and the language needs much polishing. Our Dutch friends might not be very happy to know that "The Netherlands are ruled by the all-powerful Yamaraj or Dharmaraj. He is the prime messenger of death"! (38)

G GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

Dialogue

In Spirit and in Truth. Essays Dedicated to Fr Ignatius Hirudayam, S.J., the Founder of Aikiya Alayam. By I. VIYAGAPPA, S.J. (ed.), *Madras, Aikiya Alayam*, 1985. Pp vi-247. Rs. 40.

The book under review has been written in honour of Fr Ignatius Hirudayam for his dedication to the realm of dialogue with other religions. He has been one of those rare souls in the Catholic Church who has given himself to the task of exploring the [illegible] roots of Christian life in the context of Indian spirituality. Viewing the whole presence of God in a cosmic perspective, he is able to reach down to the roots of unity, and thereby can assert with ease: "I am as much a Hindu as a Christian" (p. 3). Fr Ignatius can make this confession precisely because it is not based on an idea or a doctrine; rather it comes out of his spiritual vision, a vision nurtured by the rich spiritual tradition of India. Seeing Christianity fundamentally as a way of the Spirit, he has no hesitation in saying that it is "the Presence of a Person" (p. 3) who can create a new mode of existence for human beings.

This does not, however, mean that there are no differences. Differences there are But most of our differences come from the fact that we imprison the reality of God in words, cultural moulds and our own tradition. The most tragic aspect of the life of Christianity in our land has been that it has been presented more in terms of doctrines, dogmas and ecclesiastical structures than as a way of the Spirit. Having been presented with such a distorted picture of Christianity, the people of India have always had difficulty in accepting it as their own way of life. It is this distortion which has to be rectified, and this can be done only if people like Fr Ignatius Hirudayam present Christianity more in terms of a spiritual *sadhana* than as a system of doctrines

The other problem which we must face is the exclusivist claims of Christianity. Of course, this is not something peculiar to Christianity; it is common to all Semitic religions. The exclusivist attitude cuts the Church off from the people and from their existential predicament, and thereby makes it insensitive and indifferent. This is not just past history. It is still happening. There is no such thing as a Christian God and a Hindu God. If the reality of God has to be witnessed to, it must be at the level of life. To say that the revelation of God has taken place in Christianity alone is to imprison and localise the infinite God. Instead of earnestly seeking the presence of God in the hearts of living men, there has been a tendency in Christianity to think of God in terms of ideas and doctrines.

It is heartening to see how in this book various authors have tried to come to grips with this and similar issues. The premises of dialogue are such that

[illegible] be a one-way traffic. In the process of dialogue the Church will [illegible] the rich spiritual [illegible] of India. Externals are necessary, but they are not sufficient. The process of dialogue must be at the level of sadhana. Exploring the spiritual experiences of India will enable the Church to be in the midst of its peoples.

There are two very important aspects of Indian spirituality into which the Church must look deeply: the living reality of the guru and the place of ashrams as living communities of spiritual aspirants. It is the guru who, as a realised person, removes the darkness from the hearts of men. Mere words, whether doctrinal or otherwise, are of little use in the way of sadhana. The guru as a living reality, as a *tapasvin*, burns the vestiges of ignorance in the heart of the disciple. Christ as the *sadguru* should be seen as acting through human channels. The relationship between a guru and his disciples is one of deep trust, and of being together. It is this living relationship which, at the level of experience, must be emphasized in the Church. I am delighted that Jyoti Sahi and Fr Bede Griffiths have dealt with this question very well.

Faith is not merely a belief in certain doctrinal propositions. Faith is a living experience which is expressed in terms of human language. Fr G. Gispert-Sauch, writing from the context of Kashmir Saivism, has tried to interpret the reality of the Logos as the revelation of *Parā Vāk*. The Word is itself the point of revelation, which means that faith is not so much an effort to grasp intellectually its doctrinal expression as a reality constitutive of our true being. The human word itself is the pointer towards the Word — and this experience is made possible through a living relationship with the *sadguru*. This point — that the human word is the expression of the divine Word — is beautifully brought out by Fr F. X. Clooney. The moment we realise that God is within us, that very moment the nature of the word changes: it becomes the revelation of the Word. As Nammalvar says

> He has become one with my life,
> Making me speak this sweet poetry
> which I have spoken with my own words.
> He is my marvellous one
> who praises himself with his own words
> He is the First One, who long ago.
> in three forms spoke (p. 155).

The articles in the book are of uneven nature, as it is bound to happen. The overall effort of the authors has been sincere and honest. If such and similar efforts are made in the Church, there will be a time when the Christian community will be able to share with others the richness of the Lord's bounty. The foremost task of the Church is, therefore, to educate the community about the richness and beauty of our culture. Unless the entire community is shown the way, all efforts at dialogue may not bear much fruit. The process of dialogue should no more be at the level of the clergy: it must filter down. It is at the level of the people that real sharing and witnessing takes place. It is at the grass-root level that "the Christian must follow his Master and love with a love that gives life and brings death. But we know that love has always been stronger than death" (p. 122).

Moti Lal PANDIT

The Oriental Renaissance. Europe's Rediscovery of India and the East, 1680-1880. By Raymond SCHWAB. Trsl by Gene Patterson-Black and Victor Reinking. Foreword by Edward W. Said. *New York: Columbia University Press*, 1984. Pp. xxiv-542. N.p.

Edgar Quinet in his work *Le Genie des Religions* (1841) first coined the term "the oriental renaissance" to denote the great transformation in culture and learning that took place at the end of the eighteenth century and during the nineteenth as Western man encountered the culture of "India and the East". *La Renaissance Orientale*, the monumental work of Raymond Schwab, published in 1950, sets out to describe in detail this whole process of the acquisition of Indian and Far-Eastern knowledge, its institutions and its currency which came to mould not only Western cultural praxis generally but aesthetic praxis as well. It is no small tribute to Schwab's achievement if, thirty-four years later, his work appears in a complete English translation, printed and produced exquisitely by one of the leading University presses of the United States.

Schwab's *tour de force* comprises six main divisions, each with numerous subdivisions and concise conclusions. In the absence of a subject index these will help the many readers who may not be able to read the work from cover to cover. Part one traces the rise of the

European [illegible] of the Orient, as [illegible] by the [illegible] made by [illegible] or [illegible] and the colonial missions to India. Part two describes how Europe — first and foremost through the rise of Sanskrit studies all over the continent — gradually integrated the mass of new knowledge into the body of its scientific, institutional and imaginative structures. The active changes that thus took place in the knowledge of India and the Orient in general, are detailed in Part three. In wide-ranging analyses Schwab brings to light the metamorphosis in Western knowledge, going from philology to religious, scientific, philosophical and racial issues and, further, to the image of India and the Orient as a whole in the works of the outstanding European literary figures Part four portrays a broad range of scholars, scientists, critics, philosophers and historians showing how new items of knowledge and new dimensions in outlook are mirrored in their work. Indeed, Western cultural life as a whole (libraries, museums, laboratories) emerged from this period significantly modified And, beyond these concrete details lies the world of imagination and intellectual questioning of creative writers Schwab finds them especially in France, Germany and Russia: for instance, Hugo, Beaudelaire, Flaubert, Gobineau, Nietzsche, Wagner and Tolstoy In evoking the "Oriental" dimension of these figures Schwab throws much light on concepts, attitudes and on ideational forces that continue to affect and condition the present.

In his conclusion he contrasts, in a compact and complex style, the first renaissance with the second Whereas the first was "essentially assimilative" and did not disturb Europe's experience and conviction of its cultural centrality" (E. Said, Foreword, p xviii), the second led to a radical opening up in all fields of knowledge. "The Romantic aesthetic movement, the biological dogma of evolution, the imperialism of language in the intellectual empires, these were now the new and important things that one could agree upon" (pp 477-78)

Throughout, the work scintillates with flashes of *ésprit*, fascinating hints, reflexions and comparisons. However, it does not always avoid the danger of presenting as truly established conclusions what in fact may be only *pensées* of more or less ideosyncratic character. But they always do interest on account of the author's erudition. When Schwab repeatedly evokes the "spirit" of whole nations (especially the French and the German) in the work of this or that individual scholar or group of scholars, he does not always come across as free from prejudice, and is rather inclined to favour what he presents as appropriate *and* French perceptions. As if a perennial and ineradicable national spirit would have marked each and every scholar. Some scholars in Schwab's portayal seem to be, above all, an embodiment of their respective national or racial spirit (cf. e.g. pp. 45; 284, etc.)

Schwab relies and depends in important parts of his work on the judgement of secondary sources which he fails to evaluate critically against primary evidence. The subdivisions on "Indic Studies in India, 1830" (pp. 112-13), on "The Hindu Response: Unitarianism and Rammohun Roy" (pp. 244-48) and on "Hugo's *Orientales* and Goethe's *Divan*" (pp. 364-65) strike this reviewer as eclectic, if not somewhat superficial and patchy.

In his masterly Foreword Edward W Said aptly describes Schwab as having been more of an *orienteur* than a reliable historian of ideas A comparison of Schwab's work with the certainly more restricted yet also more sober *Indien und Europa Perspektiven ihrer geistigen Begegnung* (Basel/Stuttgart: Schwabe und Co, 1981) would seem to bear out Said's remark. (Astonishingly enough Halbfass nowhere seems even to mention Schwab's work !)

The translation of Schwab's difficult text on the whole is reliable and reads well Nevertheless, a random check revealed a number of odd renderings, for instance, "les recherches des religieux" (French orig p. 161) is rendered as "the monks' research" (p. 149) whereas the context shows that Schwab speaks of missionaries, i.e of Catholic priests and members of religious orders engaged in missionary work. "Aussi les acquisitions du pré-indianisme sont-elles des arrangements" (French orig. p. 143) reads in the translation: "Consequently, works acquired before Indic studies were themselves adaptations" (p. 132). Hence, for a scholarly perusal of the work one will be well-advised to consult always the original as well.

These remarks in no way detract from the merit of this translation. The translators and Columbia University Press deserve our gratitude for haven given to Schwab's remarkable work a new publicity and for having made it available to a world-wide readership.

Christian W. Troll, S.J.

Spirituality

Carmelite Studies. Centenary of Saint Teresa. By John SULLIVAN, O.C.D. (ed.), *Washington, ICS Publications*, 1984. Pp. 240. Pb $ 6.95.

On the occasion of the fourth centenary of Teresa of Avila the Institute of Carmelite Studies organized a symposium at the Catholic University in Washington. In this book the lectures of a competent group of scholars on Carmelite spirituality, Mediaeval history and Spanish culture are made available to a larger reading public.

The value of the book is the fact that within one cover we have a fine introduction to the world of Teresa, her country and language, her church and Spanish history, and also to this magnificent woman, Christian, scholar of the Divine and a guide who leads with wisdom to the centre of life. This book is an introduction· Teresa is discovered in her own writings, of which modern translations are available from this Carmelite centre.

The subject matter of the various conferences will indicate better than any comments the scope and value of these studies. The lectures are arranged under five major headings Under the heading of *Teresa the Woman* we have two studies on Teresa as "A Directress of Formation for All Times" and "Elements of a Feminist Spirituality in St Teresa" Under the section *Teresa and her Times* we find a study of Teresa's Avila, and of this woman as "Daughter of the Church, Woman of the Reformation". There are two studies under the heading of *Teresa and her Culture*. The first describes the "Spiritual currents at Work at the Time of St Teresa of Jesus" and the other analyses the way she used the Spanish language to communicate her experiences and the significance of this use. The two essays under the heading of *Teresa and her Church* are more theological. The first essay handles the important topic of "The Saving Role of the Human Christ" for Teresa The other study, "St Teresa's Presentation of her Religious Experience" could also be related to the study of Teresa's language as the author studies both the contemporary theological problems of the relationship between subjective religious experience and objective truth and also the variety of literary ways Teresa describes her experience. In the final section, *Teresa of the Living Spirit*, the recent prayer method called "centering prayer" is studied with reference to Teresa's prayer life. The final study gathers together various aspects of the symposium and relates Teresa to our times in an insightful way under these headings: Faith and Theology; Humility before God, the World and the Church; and Conversion, Poverty and Community.

The quality of this symposium is guaranteed by the competence of the lecturers. For mature Christian women and men who know Teresa this book will deepen their grasp of the person, her life and thought. For others who intend to read her writings and learn from her and be challenged by her to a deeper spiritual life and greater involvement as Christians in contemporary life, this book will serve as a rich introduction.

Patrick M. MEAGHER, S.J.

The Collected Works of St Teresa of Avila. Vol. 3 Translated by Kieran KAVANAUGH, O C D. and Otilio RODRIGUEZ, O C.D. *Washington, ICS Publications*, 1985. Pp 483. $ 7.95.

As we have not received Vol. I and II for review, we are unable to comment upon the complete collected works. This volume contains The Book of Her Foundations and Minor Works. The minor works include: The Constitutions, On Making the Visitation, A Satirical Critique, Response to a Spiritual Challenge and finally Teresa's Poetry. The volume concludes with a general and biblical index to this volume only (unlike the Allison Peers translation which has an index to the three volumes). The short footnotes, unfortunately, are at the end of the book, a printing convenience at the reader's expense.

This new translation is welcome as the language is far more adapted to our age than the earlier valuable translation of Allison Peers. The thought and mode of expression of Teresa at first sound strange to ears accustomed to recent spiritual literature. No translation is able to transport Teresa out of her world of spirituality, theology and the historically conditioned socio-religious expression of life in the Church and religious life in particular. The accuracy of the translation I am unable to judge, but the English reads well.

Kevin Kavanaugh has contributed a valuable 94-page introduction to the Foundations which also includes a schematic chronology of Teresa's life and a map of the foundations.

Ctd. on p. 525

Cum permissu Superiorum

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Editorial

If there is a theme that runs through most of the articles presented this month, it is *discernment*. In an age of rapid change and bewildering pluralism we feel more acutely the need of a mature and faith-inspired discernment of what is happening around us and in us. An ancient spiritual tradition, has taught us to discern in the movement of the spiritual life the vocation of each individual. Vatican II calls us to learn also from the social movements of history and discern the signs of the times.

Fr Felix WILFRED, already known to our readers, gives us ample information and an initial theological reflection on a relatively new phenomenon in our national life: the emergence of so many groups of committed people who, united by a moral and, indeed, a spiritual drive, are concerned over the powerless and oppressed in our society and devote their time and energy to help them to struggle out of their present situation. Political analysts have hailed this phenomenon as a sign of hope, as an evidence that not everything "is rotten in the State of Denmark". Our society still produces committed people, it still generates a spiritual *élan* that impels people to go beyond their selfish tendencies and the societal forces that would keep them confined to the race for power and success. A Christian cannot fail to admire and hail the dedication of these young men and women, and of many not so young, who give so much of themselves to the poor in our villages and slums all over the country. This is not done just in a spirit of compassion and beneficence: these activists identify themselves with the life and the struggles of the oppressed and see themselves as partners in a struggle that has indeed religious overtones, the ancient struggle between light and darkness.

In the Catholic Church there is a fairly long pastoral tradition concerning "vocations". We have learnt how to discern various types of vocations, even if often this skill is applied only to the vocations to the priesthood or religious life. We even "foster vocations", and have a national vocation service centre. We may today ask ourselves whether we can discern the finger of God pointing to a new form of "vocation", towards which we may encourage those who seek to follow Christ totally, young or old. We may ask ourselves, after reading the article of Fr Wilfred and the abundant recent literature on action groups, whether we should not "foster vocations" to the villages. It is true that many priests and sisters have served the poor in the villages for many years. But we can possibly speak now of a

new form of "vocation", a new expression of [illegible] serving in inter-denominational groups, well [illegible] lost in their struggles and unprotected by [illegible] in order to create a new awareness among the people. [illegible] weakness of such groups may well be a sign that God's Kingdom is operative in them. We may at least raise a song of thanks in recognition of the many workers for God's Kingdom who live and operate outside the confines of the visible Church. Is it not the case, as Jesus said, that "he who is not against us is for us"?

Fr Lorenzo Fernando draws our attention to the basic need of faith education, with its intellectual, affective and operative dimensions. Faith education is a good name for what is generally called catechetics. The relation and the distinction the author establishes between faith education and theology may help to clarify the function of each of these activities. Fernando also shows how faith education includes an element of discernment, which is needed not only to develop a critical — and self-critical — mentality, but also to distinguish what is essential from what is peripheral in our life of faith. Such discernment will make us flexible, i.e., open to the Word of God as He speaks to us afresh today. How many problems between groups in the Church today arise because of the lack of such discernment?

Fr V. Piovesan reacts favourably to the models of the Church presented earlier this year by Mr Josantony Joseph, but himself opts for a less geometrical and more theological model: the mystery of the Trinity. He finds in the Trinitarian model the key for the solution of many problems in the Church today, particularly the problems of the so-called popular Church, collegiality, and the tensions between the local and the universal Church. Fr Piovesan thinks that the Basic Christian Communities are a good expression of the Trinitarian model.

A note on the "Copernican revolution" in Muslim-Christian contacts and dialogue in recent times and a further reflection on the psalms complete the Vidyajyoti fare for this year.

The Editorial Board wishes all the readers of Vidyajyoti a very joyful Christmas and a blessed New Year.

Harbingers of Hope

Action Groups in India Today

Felix Wilfred*

ONE of the signs of the times which should hold the attention of the Church in India today is the sprouting up of *action groups*[1] in every part of the country, namely the phenomenon of educated young men and women leaving the comfort of cities and town to go and live with the poor in the villages or with marginalized groups, and work for their liberation through a wide variety of activities. This phenomenon began to appear in the late sixties and since then there has been a steady growth of action groups struggling with and for the people against the forces of oppression.

The main objective of the action groups is to free the marginalized, the underprivileged and the oppressed from various kinds of injustices and exploitations by bringing about a *transformation* in the existing social, political and economic order. According to them, unless the present power relationships, both at the macro- and at the micro-level, undergo a real mutation, the oppression of the poor and the weak will continue unabated.

The wide range of activities in which the action groups are involved have this overall thrust. They help the poor and other target groups

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*Fr Felix WILFRED is the President of the Indian Theological Association and Professor of Systematic Theology at the St Paul's Regional Seminary, Tiruchirapalli. His last contribution to VIDYAJYOTI appeared in the December 1984 issue. This article is based on a paper presented at the CBCI Standing Committee Meeting, Delhi, December 1984.

1 Cfr. S. PENDSE, A. K. ROY and H. SETH, "A Look at Non-Party Political Formation", in *How*, May 1982, pp. 16-21; Sanjit ROY, "Non-Aligned Activists," in *Seminar*, October 1982, pp. 42-52; id., "Grassroots Initiatives in India. Attempts at Delegitimizing a Creative Process. Vested Insterests at Work" in *Economic and Political Weekly*, November 11, 1983, pp. 259-262; id., "Grassroots Stirrings and the Future," in *Alternatives*, 9 (1983), no. 1, pp. 1-29; H. VOLKEN, "Action Groups: Beginning or End of a Dream ?" in *Social Action* 34 (1984), pp. 115-131; W. FERNANDES. "Some Dilemmas facing Action Groups", in *Social Action* 34 (1984), pp. 197-215; Rajni KOTHARI, "Grassroots", in *Seminar*, January 1984, pp. 47-52; id., "The non-Party Political Process" in *The non-Political Process. Uncertain Alternative*, ed. by Harsh SETHI and Smitu KOTHARI, Lokayan, Delhi 1983, pp. 18-46; Harsh SETHI, "Redefinitions: Groups in a New Politics of Transformation," in *The non-Party Political Process*, pp. 92-134; H. VOLKEN, Ajoy KUMAR and Sara KAITHATHARA, *Learning from the Rural Poor: Shared Experiences in the Mobile Orientation and Training Team*, Indian Social Institute, Delhi 1982; C. D'SOUZA, "Religious and Action Groups, in *In Christo*, 23 (1985), pp. 86-94. *Jeevadhara* no. 88 (July 1985) is fully devoted to the People's Movements in its 6 articles.

to understand their plight and its causes. They organize the people in various ways forming associations like village development groups and women's associations[2], and facilitating the formation of co-operative societies among the farmers, landless labourers, fishermen, etc. Often they take up very concrete issues like housing for the homeless, land for the landless labourers, road and drinking water facilities in villages where these are lacking. By mobilizing the people and organizing them, the activists bring to the notice of the concerned public authorities the situation of the poor and the disadvantaged sections so that these be not deprived of their legitimate rights in regard to the basic necessities of life. Action groups give also legal aid to the defenceless and help them to obtain justice through the courts.

The action groups make use of the national media for bringing to the notice of the general public long-standing oppressive situations of various groups. Some have their own publications, pamphlets and small periodicals through which they conscientize the people and help them to voice their longings and hopes. Given their low social standing, the Dalits[3], Adivasis, women and tribals merit the special attention of the activists. Particularly striking is the way in which the activists identify themselves with the life of the poor and the downtrodden, sharing their food, learning to speak their dialects and following their customs.

These action groups differ among themselves not only on the basis of the type of activities but on the basis of ideologies and approaches as well. Yet they are unanimous in emphasizing certain important values like self-respect, human dignity and rights, peoples' participation, equal opportunities for all and common actions. Their unity is thus not on the basis of religious affiliations or political leanings but on the basis of values.

To these action groups we should add also a number of grassroot movements, each one with a particular focus, that have emerged in the past few years[4]: the women's movements, the peasant movements, move-

2. Cfr. Sujata GHOTOSKAR and Vijay KANHERE, "The Role of Women in Social Change and People's Movements," in *Social Action* 34 (1984) pp. 132-144.

3. T. K. OOMMEN, "Sources of Deprivation and Styles of Protest: The Case of the Dalits in India," in *Samata* 3/1984, pp. 1-19, V. J. RAJASHEKAR, "What is 'Dalit' and 'Dalitism'?," in *Samata* 2/1984, pp. 11-14.

4. Such movements and organizations are not totally new in India. At the end of the last century many voluntary organizations and movements sprouted up which were devoted to various issues like social reform, education. Though they were non-political, yet they were instruments in creating a new era of political consciousness that culminated in the Independence of India. Cfr K. M. MUNSHI (ed.), *British Paramountacy and Indian Renaissance*, Part II, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay 1965.

[illegible] sources and deforestation, tribal movements to regain the [illegible] lands[5], etc. The orientation of these movements is akin to that of the action groups. Like most action groups, these movements too are not affiliated to any particular political party. However, certain options and leanings are not excluded.

I. The Context of the Emergence of Action Groups and Movements

a) *Political Disillusionment*

The emergence of action groups and movements starts from a sense of disillusionment experienced over the political process in the country. The functioning of a democratic society like India and the promotion of justice as intended by the preamble of the Constitution[6] requires that people effectively participate in the political process by more than the mere exercise of the right of franchise. Unfortunately, in the course of time politics has come to be dominated by the urban industrial and business class, the rural landlords and other traditional feudal forces whose interests it is made to serve.

Thus the functioning of politics and democracy is increasingly alienated from the common masses and their problems. Gandhi once said "true democracy cannot be worked by twenty men sitting at the centre. It has to be worked from below by the people of every villages."[7] But even structures like *Panchayat Raj*[8] which were introduced with a view to creating greater participation of the people in the democratic process have turned out to be practically non-entities, and where they still function, they are controlled by the rural elites. In some states, the *Panchayat* elections have been postponed for a decade and more.

While the people's participation has been fast declining, there has come about an ascendency of bureaucracy in every sphere of life. Given its middle class nature, the bureaucracy is not busy so much with serving the poor and the oppressed as with being the stooge to the elites who dominate the political and economic scene, so that it can reap its share of benefits from a corrupt system. While the traditional feudal elements in the villages — land-lords, money-lenders, rich merchants and similar groups — are growing from strength to strength and control ever more the

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5. Cfr K. S. Singh, *Tribal Movements in India*, vols I and II, Manohar, Delhi 1982-1983.
6. *Constitution of India*, Text and Commentary by P. Diwan aud P. Rajput, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi 1980², p. 12.
7. *Harijan*, January 18, 1948.
8. G. R. Reddy (ed.), *Patterns of Panchayat Raj in India*, The Macmillan Company of India, Delhi 1977.

[illegible] pushed further and further to [illegible] of the political and [illegible]. Now they are only a vote-bank to be exploited at the time of [illegible] by the politicians and their attendants through populist rhetoric.

Ironically, even the leftist parties[9] which pose as champions of the poor and the downtrodden have been sucked into the vortex of party-politics and their concrete options and functioning are motivated by immediate political and electoral considerations.

In short, instead of a democracy built up from the grassroots, we have an authoritarianism from above exercised through a corrupt bureaucracy and partisan media that pacify the people rather than give expression to their legitimate aspirations. As a result, millions of people have been rendered powerless and thrown at the mercy of those who manipulate the economic system and bask in the warmth of political patronage.

This marginalization of the masses from the political and economic mainstream and their growing powerlessness have shattered the hopes of a democratic and just society which India wanted to be at the time of Independence. It is against the background of this disillusionment and the sense of vacuum felt in the late sixties and early seventies that we should understand the spontaneous emergence of groups, movements and organizations with a will to establish the legitimate democratic rights of the poor and the powerless in the face of a system which came to betray their interests.

b) Disenchantment with a Particular Development Model

In accounting for the emergence of action groups, we should mention also the disenchantment with a developmental model that once seemed to promise a new era of wealth and prosperity for all.

In independent India, there was no dearth of policies and plans for leading the country along the path of economic growth. The dream was to transform India from its condition of underdevelopment into a modern developed state. At the same time, according to the original vision, India was to be socialistic[10] in the sense that the

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9. Cfr. Sankar GHOSE, *Socialism, Democracy and Nationalism in India*, Allied Publishers, Bombay 1971; id., *Political Ideas and Movements in India*, Allied Publishers, Bombay 1975, Hiro DILIP, *Inside India Today*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1976; D. C. GUPTA, *Indian Government and Politics*, Vikas Publishing House, Delhi 1972.

10. Cfr. Preamble of the Constitution. Though the word '*Socialist*' was introduced in the preamble with the 42nd amendment (1976), however, the idea was implicit from the beginning of the Constitution, Cfr. P. DIWAN and P. RAJPUT, (eds) *Constitution of India*, *op. cit*. p. 13. Cfr. also S. C. KASHYAP, *Human Rights vis. Parliament*, Metropolitan, Delhi 1978, specially pp. 19-51.

[illegible] plans and policies adopted by the state[11] and the manner in which they have been implemented have failed, as has been clearly shown by various analyses in these years, to bring about any appreciable improvement in the lot of the poor and the marginalized, but on the contrary have only aggravated their misery and squalor.[12]

What could be the reasons for this paradox? The answer is not far to seek. The same forces which dominate the political arena and deprive the people of real democratic participation in the political process are also mainly responsible for this state of affairs. In fact, the introduction of a technocratic and economic approach to development without taking into account existing traditional village power structures and social relationships has made it that the already dominant groups grab a lion's share of the benefits of the development programmes. The various undertakings of the state like the

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11. According to the original vision of the Five Year Plans "economic planning has to be viewed as an integral part of a wider process aiming not merely at the development of resources, but at the development of human faculties and the building up of an institutional framework adequate to the needs and aspirations of the people" (*The First Five Year Plan*, New Delhi, 1952, p. 2). But this has been belied in practice. At the end of 5 Five Year Plans and at the beginning of the 6th one, the government admitted the failure in the sector of social justice: "With regard to social justice, what we have achieved is far short of what we aimed at. After three decades of planned development, large segments of the population have yet to share in the benefits of progress or participate in the process of development. What is needed is a more effective implementation of asset transfer measures such as land reform, more equitable distribution of credit and a coordinated effort that enables the poor to join the mainstream of economic activity and provide them with an opportunity for advancement" *Sixth Five Year Plan* 1980-1985, Government of India Planning Commission, p. 10.

12. For the understanding of various models of development and for discussion on development strategies, cfr C. ELLIOTT, *The Development Debate*, SCM Press London 1971; id., *Patterns of Poverty in the Third World*, Praeger Publishers, New York 1975; C. T. KURIEN, *Poverty and Development*, CLS, Madras 1974 (this is a collection of various contributions published elsewhere); A. R. DESAI, *Essays on Modernization and Underveloped Societies*, Thacker and Co., Bombay 1971; Kusum NAIR, *Blossoms in the Dust. The Human Factor in India's Development*, Praeger Paperbacks, New York 1969; G. R. MADAN and Tara MADAN, *Village Development in India, Sociological Approach*, Allied Publishers, New Delhi 1983; G. R. MADAN, *India's Social Transformation. Problems of Economic Development*, Allied Publishers, New Delhi 1979; B. N. GANGULI and D. B. GUPTA, *Levels of Living in India*, S. Chand & Company, New Delhi 1976; Paul HARRISON, *The Third World Tomorrow*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, Middlesex 1980; F. R. FRANKEL, *India's Political Economy 1947-1977; The Gradual Revolution*, Oxford University Press, Delhi 1978; C. J. BAKER, *An Indian Rural Economy* 1880-1955; *The Tamilnadu Country Side*, Oxford University Press, Delhi 1984; G. D. JURFELDT and S. LINDBERG, *Behind Poverty: The Social Formation in a Tamil Village*, Oxford & IBH Publishing Co., New Delhi 1976; M. P. TODARO, *Economic Development in the Third World*. New York 1981; V. PILLAI, "Approaches to Development. A Critique", in *Alternatives* VIII (1982) pp. 363-380; R. D. N. DICKINSON, *To Set at Liberty the Oppressed*, World Council of Churches, Geneva 1978[2].

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Community Development Programme[13] and [illegible] ated, Rural Development Programme (IRDP), depend for their execution on the bureaucrats who work in collusion with the elites to draw for themselves maximum profit out of them, leaving the poor and the destitutes to have only some fringe benefits from such coloured development programmes and policies manifestly adopted in their favour.

Further, the concept of development viewed primarily as economic growth through technology and modernization has led to a concentration on the urban areas. As it is, the rural economy hinges on the needs and demands of the cities and towns and is controlled by the urban industry and business. This has very serious repercussions in a country like India where the overwhelming majority of the people live in villages. This situation has led to a shattering of the traditional village economy based on land and cottage industries and has contributed substantially to the strengthening of the hands of the already powerful rural groups.

c) *Disappointment with the Orientation of Development Agencies*

We should make a mention here of the Voluntary Agencies and organizations that have been involved in the uplift of the poor. These bodies have been viewed very sympathetically by the government and have been encouraged and supported in so far as they are non-political and carry out relief and developmental programmes contributing to the general welfare of the nation. They also enjoy in great measure the support of the people "because they are much more efficient and less arrogant than the lower echelons of the bureaucracy that the vast masses of the people encounter."[14]

Though most of these agencies are under religious inspiration and manifest great zeal for the cause of the poor, yet their schemes and projects have, as a matter of fact, promoted primarily economic growth. Their development works have had little impact in terms of social change or transformation which is an indispensable condition for the advancement of the community.

What is most regrettable is the lack of any serious attempt to study and analyze the power structures and social inter-relations in

13. The Community Development Programme was launched on October 2, 1952 and was abandoned in the mid-sixties. Cfr B. MUKHERJEE, *Community Development in India*, Orient Longmans, Calcutta 1961. For an analysis of the Community Development Programme, cfr C. BETTELHEIM, *India Independent*, Monthly Review Press, New York 1968, pp. 208ff.

14. Harsh SETHI, "Redefining Politics, Power and Development: Some Reflections on Voluntary Agencies and Social Change," in *Bulletin*, Madras Development Seminar Series, December 1982, pp. 176-185.

the locality or the target groups. Development is not a neutral process, to be achieved through science and technology, skills and techniques, but is very much conditioned by the local social relations and power-structures. Any amount of investment of money and personnel for development may not produce any significant results unless one is attentive to the traditional power structure in the village. It is a fact that many of the local development agencies are financed by foreign agencies. Such international collaboration is to be appreciated; yet, one should be also mindful of the fact that the foreign agencies have their own ideology of development which may not always square with the intricate local situation.

In the past these development agencies, for the most part, did not respect the potentialities inherent in the people themselves for their own development, nor did they enlist in any significant way the participation of the people in the various projects. It is true that some voluntary agencies have grown out of these constraints by learning from their experiences and have attempted new approaches. However, the orientation followed is still basically reformist.

To sum up, the action groups and other movements have appeared on the contemporary Indian scene as a kind of corrective to the present political and economic order which has frustrated the hopes of the people and has miserably failed to respond to the aspirations of the poor and the weaker sections of society. These activist groups are born also out of a disillusionment with the approach of relief and development — an approach which has not proved itself capable of effecting any real social transformation. Some of the groups have gone far ahead in thinking and experimenting, and are not content with being a corrective mechanism but are in search of an alternative to the present political and economic order.

II. The Significance of Action Groups for the Life of the Country

a) *Strengthening Democracy*

The action groups and movements do not form part of any party or electoral politics.[15] But at the same time we must admit that they are political in a deeper and perhaps in a more genuine sense in so far as they are committed to the *polis* (city), to the welfare of the country and the people.

15. Cfr. Rajni Kothari, "The non-Party Political Process", and "Grassroots" (cfr. note 1).

Because they are radically committed to the people, the activists attempt to induct the disadvantaged and oppressed citizens into the political process, and thus contribute to the evolving of a different type of politics, one no longer under the grip of the dominant groups who cripple the democratic organs and institutions meant to safeguard the interests of all.

In this respect, the contribution these groups and movements are making is very significant. They help to strengthen democracy, by empowering the powerless — construction workers, weavers, salt-workers, coolies and vendors, domestic and hotel workers, women, tribals and Dalits, etc. — and making them play an effective role. The stupendous task of keeping a complex and multi-faceted country like India on the democratic track needs today the support of new energies springing from such grassroot activists. These can constantly bring into the mainstream of national life the weaker sections of people who otherwise are marginalized and discriminated against.

Democracy in India cannot remain a farce any longer. The failure of the democratic system, and the marginalization of the masses, has inevitably led to the rise of communalisms of all kinds — communalism on the basis of ethnic origin, language, caste, religion, etc. This is natural. When people cannot express their political will effectively (except by exercising the right of franchise once in a way) and obtain justly the benefits of development, they tend to organize themselves on communal basis to fight for benefits and privileges, and thus come into woeful conflict with other communal groups. In this connection we should also make a mention of the emergence of many caste associations in various states in the past few years. In this situation it is important to make democracy really function so that the interests and rights of every citizen are guaranteed. It is precisely towards this goal that the action groups, sprouting up all over the country, are gearing their concerted efforts.

b) Upholding the Secular Ideal

The activists contribute also to the upholding of the secular ideal, of such paramount importance today for the life of the country in the face of growing communal problems. It is undeniable that the rise of communalism in India today has brought about a serious crisis of secularism. There are politico-religious groups and movements like the RSS, Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Jamaat-e-Islami, Khalistan, which are fundamentalist in their ideology and approach. The unleashing of communal forces has cost us hundreds of innocent lives

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In recent years. The riots of Aligarh (1978), Biharsharif (1981), Kanya-kumari (1981), Baroda (1982), Hyderabad (1983), Bhiwandi ([illegible]), Delhi (1984), Ahmedabad (1985), which led to senseless murders [illegible] destruction of property on a huge scale, are enough evidence of the increasing communal tensions.[16] The crowning of this communal conflict was the assassination of late Prime Minister Shrimati Indira Gandhi.[17]

For the survival of India, for the unity of the country and harmony among various groups cultures and races, and for the reinforcing of democratic structures, it is vital that we not only hold on to the ideal of secularism but also devise ways and means to put this ideal into practice

The state by itself cannot ensure from above the secular character of India without the support of the people from below There needs to be a strong secular base at the grassroot level where people interact in day-to-day life The action groups are pracisely trying to build up from the grassroots a secular force to counter the rise of communal tendencies The activists for example encourage inter-caste marriages. Some of them have set example by marrying Harijan partners themselves In the very composition of their members, the action groups cut across regional, linguistic and caste factors Though they belong to different religions, languages and castes, yet all of them are united in their *commitment to values* that transcend communal considerations Their very style of functioning works against communalism

c) *Education through Awareness-Building*

The significance of action groups can be judged also from the efforts they make towards the people's education As it is, the formal educational system enables the elite to draw maximum benefits from the system through specialised knowledge and skills It leaves out the millions of men and women whose literacy does not go much beyond thumb-impressions The massive National Adult Education Pro-

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16 For an analysis of some of the incidents, cfr the contributions of Sura Indar SURI, Joseph VELACHERRY George MATHEW and others in *Social Action* 33 (1983) No 4, On the problems of communalism and its causes, cfr A A ENGINEER (ed) *Communal Riots in Post-Independence India*, Sangam Books, Hyderabad 1984, id , 'Anatomy of Post Partition Riots", in *Mainstream* 12, 1981 A KUMAR RAY, 'Communal Politics and Communal Violence", in *Mainstream* 5 December 1981; Mushirul HASAN, *Nationalism and Communal Politics in India* 1916-1928, Manohar, New Delhi 1978, S CHOPRA and N K. SINGH, "Anatomy of a Riot", in *Economic and Political Weekly*, 19 August 1972, Satish SABERWAL, "Elements of Communalism I & II", in *Mainstream* 21 March 1981 and 28 March 1981

17 On the riots that broke out in Delhi following the assasination of Indira Gandhi, cfr *Who are the Guilty* ? Report of a Joint Inquiry into the causes and impact of the riots in Delhi from 31 October to 10 November, published by Peoples' Union for Democratic Rights/Peoples' Union for Civil Liberties, Delhi 1984.

gramme launched by the Government in 1978 has been subverted by the political powers and the bureaucracy.

Education is essential for the development of peoples and their progressive emancipation from the powers that hold them in bondage. But this education is not just the capacity to read and write. Even non-formal education often means mere literacy imparted to the adults outside regular school hours and syllabus. The activists who work at the grassroots are involved in a much deeper educative activity than formal and non-formal education understood in the above sense. Since they believe in the capacity of the people to develop themselves, they concentrate their attention on building awareness in them. They enable the people not so much to read words as to read the world. Theirs is an education to reality — to the reality of people's own daily lives, brought about by a process of analysis and reflection. This process leads the people to change their own situation. This is a slow but lasting form of education.[18]

Through this method, the people are freed from their attitude of resignation; hope is instilled in them and self-confidence generated. The method creates, besides, a strong sense of solidarity among the people. Once mere objects in the hands of manipulative powers, they are enabled now to be the subjects of their own history.

The action groups make use with great effect of traditional forms of dramas, folklore songs, *villupattus*, *kathakalakshepams* and the contemporary street theatre plays. They also promote people's theatres in which villagers themselves are the actors.[19] They encourage the people to write in their publications, and thus they also help form local leadership

The impression is sometimes created as though conscientization were the monopoly of Communists and Marxists. But the fact is that even Gandhi built up great awareness among the various sectors of the Indian rural population and other under-privileged people. Did he not conscientize the poor peasants of Kheda in Bombay presidency, to

18. Cfr H VOLKEN, *Learning from the Rural Poor* (cf. note 4), J. M. HEREDERO, *Rural Development and Social Change. An Experiment in Non-Formal Education*, Manohar 1978, W FERNANDES (ed), *People's Participation in Development. Approaches to Non-Formal Education in India*, Indian Social Institute, Delhi 1980.

19. People's Theatres are widely used in Third World countries for the purpose of conscientization For a case study with ample bibliographical indication cfr Ross KIDD and Mamunur RASHID, "Theatres by the People, for the People and of the People· People's Theatre and Landless Organising in Bangladesh," in *Social Action* 34 (1984) pp 157-188; cfr also Ross KIDD and Nat COLETTA (eds), *Tradition for Development Indigenous Structures and Folk Media in Non-formal Education.* (Report and Papers from the International Seminar on The Use of Indigenous Social Structures and Traditional Media in Non-formal Education and Development, 5-12 November 1980) Berlin 1980; J. SHRAMPICKAL, "*The Play's The Thing*...The Pastoral Uses of Drama as an Effective Median of Communication", in *Vidyajyoti* 48 (1984) pp. 388-379.

the indignation of the British authorities ? Did he not create awareness among the poor tenants of Champaran, to the great fury of the powerful planters ? "It is true" he said to the people of Kheda, "that the collector is going to attach your property, your plots, if you do not pay the land revenue dues. Your plots will be auctioned But what can he do if no one bids at the auction ? Tell the collector when he next comes to your village that he should put your plot in his pockets and take it to England "[20] The lessons he imparted to them were/ clear if they stood together they would not be thrown off their feet by the unjust powers, and that it is impossible to govern people without their consent

Creating awareness among the people need not be always at the macro-level Taking up some crucial problems of the people in a small locality can have a tremendous impact on the whole area In the case of Gandhi Champaran was but a small dot on the map of India Rajkumar Shukla was a s mple peasant on whose request Gandhi visited the locality and knew for himself the pl ght of the poor indigo tenants and the planter tenant conflict The British authorities considered his presence as a threat to peace and order and wanted him to leave the place by the next available train Gandhi s efforts to obtain justice to the poor tenants of Champaran and to conscientize them of their situation as exploited had its repercussions in the whole country [21]

The goal of awareness building is ultimately to help the people to regain their human dignity and the rights of which they are stripped by the local exploitative forces The role of action groups then, is a service to the cause of establishing human civil and constitutional rights among the least — the sections which are most vulnerable by their very low social positions meagre economic resources and bleak political possibilities

The dignity of the people and their right of self determination and decision making are upheld in the approach followed by the activists In this process of education development and liberation cease to be the work of outside agents with their own favourite ideologies and become the achievement of the people awakened to their selfhood Through the same process leadership among the people is created

Many of the activists are careful that they do not assume on themselves the role of the people and of the local leadership They wish to be only catalysts animators or facilitators. Similarly they are aware that ready-made solutions and prefabricated models will not suit the local conditions Though in the in tial stages there

20 Quoted in Arun SHOURIE Reasons for Hope," in *New Quest* No 34 July August 1982 p 205 id *Symptoms of Fascism* Vikas Publishing House, Delhi 1978 specially chapter 4 The Role of Popular Movements — A Gandhian Perspective," pp 144-173 cfr also Ignatius JESUDASAN *A Gandhian Theology of Liberation* Orbis Books New York 1984

21 B. R. NANDA *Mahatma Gandhi A Biography* Oxford University Press, Delhi 1982[2] specially chapter 20 Peasants and Workers pp 156ff

was a tendency to do themselves the analysis for the people, today [illegible] action groups tend only to help the people do their own analysis of the situation. There is hope that from various local experiences of such analysis some common methodology may evolve which will be fully Indian in its nature.

III. Significance of Action Groups for the Church and its Mission

In the first two parts of this paper we saw how important the grassroot movements are at the present juncture in the history of our country. Though exteriorly not very impressive, they play a significant role in nation-building, and in strengthening the democratic values and upholding the secular character of the country through their involvement in the education, development and liberation of the poor and the exploited. These cannot but also be the concerns of a Church that wants to sink deep roots in the Indian soil and to insert itself in the life and problems of the people of this country.

Some of these concerns come through very clearly in the statements of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India. In fact, in their communication to the Synod of 1974, the bishops expressed the "need to see her (the Church's) task of evanglization within the context of the total situation of the country and her people," and they perceived the need for the Christian community "to be fully involved in the plan of God which is at work in the struggles and aspirations of the country's people, liberating them from all forms of material, social and spiritual alienation."[22] In this service of justice and liberation which is at the same time part of her evangelizing mission,[23] the Church can find dedicated collaborators in the action groups and movements.

From the Perspective of the Kingdom of God

In order to grasp the meaning and role of the various movements and groups, it is not enough to start from a vision of the Church as an institution with its well-defined structures, doctrines, laws, etc. Nor should we start from a dichotomic perspective, according to which the works of development and liberation effected by these activists would be merely humanistic, or of the natural order, in contrast to the supernatural mission of the Church. Dichotomic thinking with neat compartmentalization distorts the truth.

The perspective we need to adopt for our understanding of these groups is that reality of which the Church itself is only a sign and instrument, namely the Kingdom of God. God's Kingdom is not a land or a territory but a net-work of relations, a communion-koinonia.

22. *Minutes of the General Meeting of CBCI*, Calcutta 1974, p. 156.
23. Cfr. *Octogesima Adveniens* and *Evangelii Nuntiandi* of Pope Paul VI.

[illegible]

As a reality of communion, the Kingdom [illegible] the totality of human reality in its relation to God, to the world and the whole creation and the interrelations among human beings. The Kingdom is *universal* in character and leaves no room for any dichotomy, because there is nothing that is real which is not in the sphere of the Kingdom of God and could be separated from it. Therefore the whole of human life in its entirety, with its social, political and economic dimensions, is under the rule of God.

The Kingdom of God as communion and fellowship is not an abstract reality existing in itself but a reality that is present *among the people* (cfr Lk 17 21) and it manifests itself in their day to day life.[24] This new communion and fellowship with God as Father and human being as brothers and sisters[25] and with the whole of nature as the gift of God breaks into the life of the people through the words Jesus speaks and the concrete deeds he performs. For Jesus, the Kingdom is not something which bypasses the human realities

We may draw a certain parallel between the mystery of Jesus and the mystery of the Kingdom of God In Jesus the human and the divine exist without the one being confused with the other Similarly the Kingdom in its definite form and stage is not to be confused or simply equated with development and liberation At the same time just as in Jesus the divine could not be seen known and experienced except in its incarnate form that is to say in and through his historical incarnate existence, so too the Kingdom of God can be experienced by us only in and through the historical realities We experience the Kingdom of God when it incarnates as love, communion freedom and hope in the inter human relationship in all its dimensions through the work of development and liberation In this way the Kingdom of God is not something that runs parallel to human experiences and history but it breaks into our experience, into our history

The universal communion which the Kingdom of God is, requires a new mode of being, thinking and acting (conversion), to which Jesus appealed right from the beginning of his ministry (Mk 1 15, Mt 3.2) The precepts of love of God and love of neighbour illustrated in the teachings of Jesus and exemplified in his life are meant to foster and sustain the reality of the communion which the Kingdom of God represents.[26]

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24 Cfr G BORNKAM, *Jesus von Nazareth* Verlag Kohlhammer Stuttgart 1975[10], E SCHWEIZER *Jesus*, SCM Press London 1971 G M SOARES-PRABHU, "Good News to the Poor The Social Implications of the Message of Jesus" in *Biblebhasyam*, 4 (1978) pp 195-201

25 Cfr F HAUCK, 'Koinonia," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol III 1972 pp 789ff

26. G M SOARES-PRABHU "The Synoptic Love-Commandment The Dimension of Love in the Teaching of Jesus, in *Biblebhasyam*, 9 (1983) pp 85 103, K RAHNER, "Reflections on the Unity of the Love of Neighbour and the Love of God," in *Theological Investigations*, Vol VI, Darton, Longman & Todd, London 1969, pp 231-249

Since the Kingdom of God encompasses all levels of human existence, conversion cannot be only a change of mind and heart but also necessarily a transformation of the human reality in its social, political and economic relations. Anything that obstructs the flow of communion in human life and its realities stands against the Kingdom. The injustices heaped upon the poor, the exploitations of every kind, the violations of human dignity and human rights, amount to a refusal of communion and therefore also the denial of the rule of God.

The Good News of the Kingdom is a gift to man. Yet, the collaboration of man is needed so as to bring every sphere of human life under God's reign. Man cooperates for the arrival of the Kingdom first and foremost by removing all that arrests the flow of communion. Liberating the poor and the oppressed is nothing but removing the obstacles to communion in such a way that no one is excluded, no one is marginalized.

For the Church, to be instrument of the Kingdom entails, therefore, the mission of liberation. Consequently, the Church should feel at home with every movement and group that invests itself in liberating the downtrodden and the marginalized. These movements and groups are doing what the Church itself is called to do by her vocation to be the sign and instrument of the Kingdom. Through their commitment to the cause of the exploited, women, tribals, Dalits and other weaker sections, the activists contribute greatly to create fellowship, equality and brotherhood and thus through their deeds become proclaimers of the Kingdom promised to the poor and the least. The works of various movements and action groups, therefore should not be considered simply as humanist or philanthropic: they fall within the sphere of the Kingdom of God and the mystery of salvation. Evangelization is nothing but making present the reality of the Kingdom of God in the life of the people through word, deed and witness.[27]

A tree is known by its fruits (Mt 7:16-20) and the presence of the Kingdom of God among his people is known by the transformation it brings about in their lives and environment. One is often struck by the simplicity of life and the spirit of asceticism, self-denial and self-sacrifice among the members of action groups. There are many of them who commit themselves to the cause of the poor at the cost of serious risks to their health, and work courageously in circumstances of great insecurity, harassment and danger even to their lives. Activists have been beaten up, or implicated and detained in police custody for days on end without trial. The stringent demands of their commit-

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27. Cfr *Evangelii Nuntiandi.*

[illegible] to [illegible] life so that they [illegible] in the service of [illegible] poor and help them live with human dignity.

Human Rights — A Common Concern

The significance of action groups and movements has also to be viewed from the point of their contribution to the establishment of human rights today — human rights to which the Church itself has given much attention in these years.[28] Speaking of human rights, we must distinguish two trends. There is an understanding deriving from the liberal tradition of the XVIII century Europe and the French revolution which spoke of *droits de l'homme* — rights of man[29] Here rights are centered on the individual person and the rights meant are, for example, freedom of thought, speech, movement, freedom to marry or to form associations The second trend goes beyond this conception of human rights, without however denying the above Human rights are understood more as the *rights of the poor* and the oppressed to have food, shelter, health care and other basic amenities of life[30] This latter understanding of human rights is very close to the Bible and the early Christian tradition.

> The Church s accent has been not on the claims of one s own rights or even the rights of the Church itself, but rather on the concern for the violation of the rights of others — particularly the weak and the poor and the defenceless It is here that 'rights' are most clearly identified We have a record of early Christian concern with the right of those who were oppressed and unable to defend their own rights.[31]

28 Cfr the document of the Synod on *Justice in the World* November 30, 1971 *Octogesima Adveniens* Apostolic Letter of Pope Paul VI to Cardinal Maurice Roy President of the Pontifical Commission Justice and Peace, on the Occasion of the Eightieth Anniversary of the Encyclical *Rerum Novarum* May 14 1971 *The Church and Human Rights* A Document of the Pontifical Commission of Justice and Peace, December 10 1974. Cfr also O Hoffe Papst Johannes Paul II und die Menschenrecht," in *Freiburger Zeitscrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 27 (1980), pp 36-55

29 For the question of Church and human rights at that period cfr B Plongeron "L'Eglise et les Declarations des Droits de l'Homme au XVIIIe siècle," in *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, 1979, pp 358-377 Cfr also D F Polish Human Rights in Roman Catholicism" in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* Vol 19 (1982), pp 25-39

30 "This new trend in human rights activism in India effectively illustrates the limitations of the conventional concept of human rights as rights of individual members of the civil society Since the use of 'civil space' for the enforcement and protection of rights of individual citizens is by and large restricted to the politically and economically organised sectors of society, the liberal and legalistic concept of human rights is proving to be of limited utility for those without entitlements and outside the organised sectors They have to create new political and civil spaces by converting their needs for survival and development into political economic and cultural rights not only as individuals but as collectivities." D L Sheth, "Human Rights New Approaches, New Definitions," in *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, June 3, 1984, p 41

31 S S. Harakas, "Human Rights. An Eastern Orthodox Perspective," in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, vol 19 (1982), p 17, cfr also Julio De Santa Ana, *Good News to the Poor The Challenge of the Poor in the History of the Church*, CLS, Madras 1978

The concern of the Church today with the issue of human rights, understood especially in this sense, is not a concern [illegible] from its vocation to be sign and instrument of the Kingdom, to be sign of unity and fellowship in the world. In this respect, the various activities in which the action groups are engaged, their commitment to the cause of the poor and their staunch defence of human rights[32] are not alien to the concerns of the Church itself.

Promotion of Leadership

In order to carry out the evangelizing mission of the Church and make the power of God s Kingdom felt in the depth of the human and societal life, it is imperative that we have a committed laity working at the grass-roots. The action groups become significant for the Church in so far as they constantly remind it of the need of men and women who would be committed to the transformation of the present state of things

The Constitution on the Church in the Modern World has expressed in emphatic terms the Christian responsibility for the temporal realities The negligence of such responsibility could even endanger salvation It has also put us on our guard against a dichotomic vision separating religious life and temporal involvement

> Therefore, let there be no false opposition between professional and social activities on the one part and religious life on the other The Christian who neglects his temporal duties neglects his duties to 'ards his neighbour and even God and jeopardizes his eternal salvation[33]

The laity exercise their vocation in the midst of the world Its social, political and economic realities require them to involve them selves in the struggle for a better ordering of these spheres in the name of justice and freedom In this way the laity fulfil their prophetic role — a role which they are called to play in the present situation of oppression so reminiscent of the times of the prophets of the O T[34]

The works of development education and liberation promoted by the action groups right in the midst of the people and in spite of heavy odds and risks should be a paradigm for the laity in fulfilling

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32 It is between this programme of decimation in the name of development and the response of the marginalized groups in terms of agitations and unrest that a space is created by action groups by redefining the concept of human rights. Not merely through intellectual formulations but through *praxis* which transforms needs into rights. These groups and organizations are not single issue organizations and may not be identifying themselves as 'human rights organisations' But they are playing a vital role by creating *conditions* for the impoverished which enable *them* to convert their needs into rights." D L SHETH, *art cit* (note 30), p. 41

33 *Gaudium et Spes* 43

34 Cfr *Lumen Gentium* Chapter IV and *Apostolicam Actuositatem*.

[illegible]
their Christian communities. The Church should promote the
involvement of the laity in the social, political and economic fields
more generously and more than ever before. The prominence of the
involvement of the clergy and the religious in political action may not
be understood as long as the Church does not take serious steps to
foster an active participation of the laity in the political field and,
through them, help to transform the situation of injustice and oppres-
sion.

Areas of Misunderstanding

a) Action Groups — Are they Marxist ?

To categorize action groups summarily as Marxist and Communist a gross distortion of truth. Interestingly, the Marxists themselves have accused the grassroot movements of being new imperialist strategies of capitalist countries and actionists of being CIA agents ! The action groups, according to the Marxists, diffuse tension and thus delay the revolution It may be observed in this context that some of these groups came into existence precisely because of the disillusionment with the practice of leftist parties which seemed to be led by opportunist electoral concerns, like any other political party, leaving aside the cause of the poor and the oppressed

Thus action groups are often caught between two criticisms On the one hand the Marxists decry them and feel very much threatened by them, because the sector of the poor and the oppressed on which they supposed they had a monopoly is being invaded by the new movements that do not share their ideology[35]. On the other hand, these action groups come under heavy censure from certain Church circles for being Marxist, for following the ideology of class struggle and advocating violence and revolution A closer study reveals how both these charges lack substance It may be enough to observe a point or two here

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35 Cfr Prakash KARA "Action Group/Voluntary Organization A Factor in Imperialist Strategy" in *The Marxist Review* April-June 1984 pp 19-54 Speaking of Christian action groups, the author states that they view Communists as manipulators "The Christian Action groups which claim to be radical seek to pit their following against the organised left because of a profound ideological incompatibility which emanates from the very theory they propagate They view the Communist party and its mass organizations as manipulators of the mass, creating dependent groups leading to bureaucratic control and imitating the culture of repression of the rightists. What is sought to be offered instead is an individualistic variety of Christian reformism" Cfr also J JOHN, "Critique of Action Groups," in *The Marxist Review*, August 1982, pp 67-77 See also the *Report of CPI (M) Central Committee on Political Development*, Calcutta, June 1981, which is very critical of action groups. A reply to the report by B. WIELENGA, in *The Marxist Review*, Oct.-Nov 1981.

The action groups, most of which are non-political (in the sense of party-politics), want to maintain their independence from political parties including the Leftist, and this orientation is pursued precisely to be able to serve the people and free them from exploitation. These groups realise that mere theory and slogans can harm the real interests of the people when people are made use of by an ideology for its political ends. The activists do not evince much interest in the theoretical aspects of Marxism, absorbed as they are in the pressing problems of the people and their immediate needs. But when the Marxists are really concerned about the people at the grassroots, the activists may collaborate with them without however compromising their independence.

That the action groups are not concerned with Marxist ideology as such becomes evident from the fact that the Marxists bemoan the predominance of method over theory in the action groups. The implication is that these groups are not manifesting interest in the Marxist ideology. An article in the *Marxist Review* speaks of action groups' "undescribable abomination towards theoretical understanding".[36]

That these groups do not blindly espouse Marxist ideology is clear also from the fact that they are very respectful of and sensitive to the religious dimension and cultural ethos of the people. From their active involvement the action groups have come to realize that the Indian masses cannot be roused merely by economic considerations but that the religious and cultural realities are as important, if not more, in the life of the people. In fact by their very style of life and identification with the people — living with them, sharing their food, their concerns etc — the activists have acquired greater sense of the culture of the people. They make use of artistic and traditional cultural expressions of the people to conscientize them on various problems like casteism, dowry, superstitions etc.

a) *Action Groups and the Analysis of Society*

Over the years the Church has come to understand that the misery and squalor of millions of people do not result merely from a lack of development understood as modernization and technological advancement but that they have deep roots in the present exploitative systems. Numerous texts both from the universal magisterium and from the statements of CBCI can be quoted which clearly speak of the evil inherent in the present day structures and the urgent need to change them.[37] At any rate it is the Marxist analysis that has brought

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36 J. JOHN, *art. cit.*, pp. 67-77.

37 Cfr *Justice in the World*, Synodal Document of 1971; *Octogesima Adveniens*; some of the important CBCI documents like "Poverty and Development" in *Report of the General Meeting of CBCI*, Bombay, April 15 & 16, 1971, pp. 42-46: "To achieve this aim the Church must accept that while personal services and relief work will always have their importance, the more relevant and meaningful efforts will concentrate on change of atmosphere, transformation of structures, creation of new relationships and fresh value systems ..."; the "Memorandum to the 1971 Synod of Bishops" in *Report of the Standing Committee*, Bangalore, August 1-3, 1971, pp.

to [illegible] functioning of society and has revealed the interconnections between the various systems — political, social, cultural and religious. The use of terms and concepts like '*unjust structures*', '*oppressor*' '*oppressed*' '*exploitation*' by the magisterium in its documents shows that certain aspects of Marxian analysis have been consciously or unconsciously adopted by the Church to understand the situation of the poor and interpret its root causes. To use this societal analysis, obviously, is not the same thing as espousing the Marxist philosophy.

Rightly did John XXIII, and still more explicitly Paul VI point out a distinction between Marxism as ideology and as historical movement [38] With a historical movement committed to alleviate the plight of the poor the Church can enter into dialogue and even collaborate in so far as the Church shares with it the same concern for the poor It is at this level that a certain critical use of Marxist analysis can be very helpful specially in the concrete day to day life at the micro-level

The action groups are precisely doing this analysis in the concrete situation of life in the villages, identifying the causes of the oppressive situation of the poor, the landless, the Dalits and other marginalised groups Such an analysis seems to be fundamental for bringing the Gospel message of liberation into the life of the people If, as *Evangelii Nuntiandi* says, "salvation is liberation from everything that oppresses man' (n 9), the ways in which this oppression is taking place has to be analyzed so that through their word and deed the disciples of Jesus become effective witnesses to the power of his Gospel to free men from all bondages

c) *The Fact of Conflicts*

When these groups work for the promotion of the weaker sections, they as a matter of fact come into conflict with the local vested interests Sin is embodied in various structures — social, political, cultural and economic The activists are faced with this power of sin that strangles the life of the poor In this situation, facilitating the dawn of God's rule on the life of the poor inevitably entails confronting the socially and politically embodied power of sin. A Christian, in any

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1 iv "Existing structures which are inherently unjust need to be changed" "Appeal to the people of India", in *Report of the General Meeting*," Madras April 6-14, 1972, pp. 48-52, "Communication and Recommendations on Evangelization" in *Minutes of the General Meeting*, Calcutta January 6-14, 1974, pp 156-175, "The Church's Response to the Urgent Needs of the Country," in *Report of the General Meeting*," Bangalore, January 9-17, 1978, pp 78-85, "Final Statement of the General Meeting," Nagpur, January 31-February 1984, in the *Report of the General Meeting*, pp 75-84

38 *Pacem in Terris* 159, 160, *Octogesima Adveniens* 30, 31

[illegible], cannot compromise with these structures of sin. [illegible] to struggle against them with the courage of true Christian faith and the power of Christian love.

> It is important to be aware of the fact that the concepts of Christian faith and love have been emasculated since the time of the Enlightenment through individualistic interpretations. Faith is not only a body of doctrines to be believed in by individuals but it also a great force which can and should confront the world and its ways.[39] Similarly love is not a mere inter-personal relationship, a feeling of well-being between individuals. Love can express itself in a wide variety of ways in the life of society. Love can also resist, denounce, protest, love can be revolutionary and yet can be genuine love. How else are we to understand the words of Jesus against the rich, the Pharisees and the Scribes (Lk 6 24, 11 42-44; Mt 23; 13-36)? Either we must suppose that Jesus excluded from his love a great number of people (the rich, Pharisees, etc.) or else love should be given a much wider connotion so as to include within its ambit also denouncing and protesting, and thus coming into serious conflicts and struggles. To be a Christian does not mean not to have enemies. We are called rather *to love* our enemies.

Refusing to compromise with the power of evil is something very Christian. Therefore, the confrontations and conflicts that result in the work of liberation should not be interpreted as though those involved in it are on principle promoting class-struggle or inciting people to violence This is one of the accusations levelled against the action groups to discredit their work It is true that these groups generally share a kind of socialistic vision But it should be pointed out that most of these groups do not believe at all in the capture of state-power through class struggle — a central dogma of Marxism[40] — but are deeply concerned in promoting the integral development of the human person and his/her liberation

Bridging the Hiatus between Documents and Practice

It is over one decade since the CBCI issued a very important statement on poverty (1971) in which the bishops strongly condemned the situation of injustice prevailing in the country [41] The bishops said

39 M VELAZQUES, "Faith Hope and Political Action," in *Lumen Vitae* 1973, pp 575-592, J ALFARO, "*Christian Hope and the Liberation of Man*," Rome 1978, Rene COSTE, *Les dimensions politiques de la foi*, Editions Ouvrières, Paris 1972, id, *La responsabilité politique de l' Eglise*, Editions Ouvrieres, Paris 1973, G MATAGRIN, *Politique, Eglise et Foi*, Le Centurion Paris 1972, Rene METZ and Jean SCHLICK (eds), *Politique et foi*, Strasburg 1972, J M BONINO, *Towards a Christian Political Ethics*, SCM Press, London 1983

40 The Marxists view the activities of action groups not as revolutionary but as bourgeois reformism "Revolutionary would be only when these groups act in view of capturing state-power Anything less than that would have nothing to do with the Leftists" in J JOHN, *art cit* (note 39)

41 "Poverty and Development", in *Report of General Meeting of the CBCI*, Bombay, April 15-16, 1971, pp 42-46

> [illegible]

Since then, time and again in its General Meetings and in the meetings of various Commissions, the problems of justice in the country have been spoken about and they have commanded the attention of the leaders of the Church as a body. At the Mangalore meeting of 1978 when the theme of the "Church's Response to the Urgent Needs of the Country" was taken up, the bishops stated

> Poverty, stratification, and malnutrition characterize the liv s of our countrymen and any attempt to work for justice must begin by enabling people to re lize what is most basic in the rights of men In the achievement of a just society, the entire Christian community is involved, working in collaboration with all men of good will We encourage our committed laymen imbued with the correct attitude towards society, to move into such fields where they can influence the change of unjust structures [42]

These words have great weight They were reiterated verbatim in the Final Statement of Nagpur (1984) [43] It is important that we note a few basic points contained in the above excerpt i) The peoples' participation in the work of justice is underlined ("enabling the people to realize what is most basic in the rights of men") ii) The responsibility of the whole community in the work for justice is stressed ("the entire Christian community") iii) The need for "collaboration with all men of goodwill" is pointed out iv) Finally, the statement reminds the Christian lay people of their duty to involve themselves in society so that "they can influence the change of unjust structures".

In the face of such expressive statements, a question poses itself What concrete steps have been taken by the official Church for promoting the cause of justice ? One of the complaints voiced against the Church is that its solidarity with the poor and its work of liberation do not go beyond the confines of statements, declarations and resolutions Many people have today become very sceptical about the seriousness of such verbal tirades and phantom-fights against injustice and inequality. These statements and declarations of the bishops proceed, admittedly, out a of a sincere desire to contribute to the life of the nation and especially of its poor by removing the constraints which stand in the way of development. But the statements and declarations are belied

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42. Cfr *Report of the General Meeting*, Mangalore, 1978, Nos. 2, 4, 13

43 "Final Statement of the General Meeting of Nagpur," January 31-February 6, 1984, *Report*, pp 75-76

[illegible]

when the [illegible] leaders of the Church [illegible] of justice in their own area of jurisdiction, [illegible] even oppose the efforts to [illegible] these [illegible]

Another [illegible] lacuna is that concrete steps and means, methods and approaches for translating the ideals into practice have not been suggested in the documents In such a situation, the Church should surely rejoice over the fact that there exist movements and groups which, though not consciously, but in reality, take the substance of its statements closer to the people developing new approaches and methods for this One cannot turn a blind eye to these groups who give flesh and blood to the ideals contained in the social teachings, statements and declarations of the Church

To cite one example, the Church documents have explicitly taught for almost one hundred years that the right of ownership is not an absolute right but that it is conditioned by the needs of others [44] This teaching is contained already in the *Rerum Novarum* of Pope Leo XIII and more recently in *Gaudium et Spes* of Vatican II [45] But how does one put this teaching into practice so that millions of our landless people subsisting below poverty line are not continuously deprived of food and shelter ? We find many instances in which the action groups and peoples movements have conscientized the peasants and succeeded in their efforts to obtain lands for them

Not by Institutional Means Alone

The situation in which we live today poses demands on the Church that surpass the capabilities of its present structural and institutional means It would therefore be illusory to believe that the mission of the Church could be fulfilled through its present structures and the operational means at its disposal To be faithful to the Gospel, the Church needs today to show a greater openness and relate itself to the stirrings of the spirit at the grassroot level For the Church, the effective way of being a sign and instrument of the Kingdom and of fulfilling its mission should not consist in taking upon itself all works of development and liberation and relying solely on its resources, but in recognizing, encouraging and promoting the initiatives taken by groups and movements The Church is increasingly called upon to *reveal* the power of God s Kindgdom operating among the people through movements which are outside its institutional apparatus and visible structures This requires that the official Church transcend its proclivity to sit in judgement on and to pigeonhole too quickly

44 The origins of this teaching can be traced back to a much earlier period of the Fathers and the Scholastics. Cfr Léon De Soumagne, Propriété de droit naturel' Thèse neo-scolastique et tradition scolastique," in *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* 72 (1950) pp. 580-607

45 *Rerum Novarum* 7 *Gaudium et Spes* 69-71

[illegible] whatever happens beyond the realm of its control. It should rather consider with sympathy whether the mission of Jesus is not carried out through these movements and groups. Where the mission of Jesus takes place, the Church cannot remain an alien.

There is a tendency to reduce everything to what is already known, what is already experienced. The new stirrings and impulses of the Spirit, however, are very often surprising, and they demand that the Church, instead of reducing them to her known ways, forms and categories, be open to innovation. The attitude of openness and of search, is necessary to understand the new movements and the emergence of various action groups for the cause of justice, equality and brotherhood. The pilgrim nature of the Church demands that the Church does not recoil on itself but readily recognizes *a new frontier* in its evangelizing mission. The pioneering groups would then be much encouraged by a sympathetic understanding of what they attempt to do.

That these movements and groups do not come under the *control* of the official Church, its organs and its structures — parish, diocese, etc. — is not reason enough to deny the merit of their work and its import for the life of the country and for the arrival of the Kingdom of God. Many of the activist groups, in fact, are not against the Church but are deeply interested in dialoguing with it and they follow with interest the developments in the Church specially concerning its commitment to the poor. They are very much disappointed when they find that the official Church is supicious of them, and attaches labels to them and their works.

Support and Collaboration despite Limitations

It is true that the activist groups are often critical of the Church. Their criticism is directed mainly against the chasm they discover between its teaching and practice, and the disproportionate attention given to secondary matters to the neglect of more serious issues affecting the life of the people. They are genuinely concerned about the way the institutional Church functions and relates itself to the problems of the people. They desire that Bishops, priests and religious divest themselves of all attachment to money, power, position, pomp, and pageantry, and become living witnesses to the Gospel of the Kingdom by their identification and solidarity with the poor. The fact that they are critical should not exclude dialogue and collaboration with them, but rather should provoke us to self-renewal and a deeper commitment to the cause of the poor.

While speaking of the significance of action groups and the need to collaborate with them we do not want to ignore certain limitations inherent in them. Some of the groups are in search of clarity with regard to their orientation, some others are groping as to whether they

should function only as a corrective mechanism or provide a new alternative, and still some others are considering whether and to what extent they can relate themselves, without losing their identity, to some of the existing political parties. We should also point out that there are splits in some groups owing to conflicts of personalities, differences in ideologies and the use of foreign funds received to support their work. Finally there are a few fake groups which take advantage of the label "action groups" but are not committed to the cause of the poor.

While being conscious of these and other limitations, we should realise that the action groups and movements are still in a process of growth and maturation. In a socio-political process the time factor is very important. Therefore, it would be narrow and short-sighted to magnify the limitations and defects of the action groups and fail to see their steady growth and their positive contribution. Despite their limitations, the hope they represent is so overwhelming that one can ignore them or be indifferent to them or assume an attitude of hostility towards them only at the cost of disbelieving in the continuing presence and action of the Spirit in history. The Spirit, after all, does not wait for ideal situations in order to work among men. He works in spite of inescapable human limitations in a world where good and evil exist intermingled. The presence of cockles in the grain field should not lead us to abandon the harvest altogether.

These groups and movements are very flexible in their approach. There is a lot of thinking and evaluation going on within them, partly on the basis of their concrete experiences. They are open to change and are ready to collaborate with individuals and groups which share the same concern for the welfare, organization and education of the downtrodden and the exploited. In as much as the Church has the same concerns, they are not averse to dialogue with it, and most groups warmly welcome it. However, they will not accept a paternalistic or moralizing role of the Church and its institutions. They wish that the relation of the Church with them take the form of a mature collaboration on the basis of concrete issues and problems which people face at the micro-level.

Now, given the great significance of these groups for the life of the country and for the mission of the Church and given their concerns, the CBCI would be taking a step in the right direction if it enters into dialogue and collaboration with these groups through its organ *Caritas*, which by its very nature is in a position to fulfil this task. Besides relief and development works, *Caritas* has among its aims "the promotion of justice, peace and the animation and education of people at all levels for total human development."[46]

46 *Caritas India: Rules and Regulations*, art. 1.3.

The nature and mode of functioning of the action groups indicate that the dialogue and collaboration should take place not at a general plane or at macro-level but at the grassroot level. Through diocesan Social Service Societies and other [illegible] *Caritas* could promote collaboration with the action groups of the locality and also involve itself in the training of more personnel who would work jointly with these groups

We should also take note of the fact that already there are some individuals and groups of priests, religious and laity in the Church who are sympathetically disposed towards the action groups and try to forge closer links with them Some are even members of these groups These efforts which take place at the periphery, so to say, of the Church could be greatly strengthened and their works could be made more effective by the support, inspiration and encouragement of the official Church through *Caritas*

In conclusion, India is still a fragmented society. The divisions on the basis of caste, language and religion continue to create ever greater fragmentation Effective remedies to the manifold social evils affecting the lives of the people cannot be offered in general. Working for the development of people and freeing them from exploitation today needs, from the strategic point of view, an approach from the grassroots. Small movements and groups with flexibility and immediate contact with reality can play a more significant role than what could be achieved by macro level initiatives These small units can penetrate the milieu and effect social transformations Though the efforts of these groups seem to make little difference when compared to the immensity of the problems affecting India, yet they are beginning to have a certain cumulative effect on the life of the nation The success of these groups is not so much in the concrete achievements — which however are not negligible compared to the constraints and limited resources with which they work — as in the *qualitative* change they are bringing into the life of the people, and above all the hope they represent for the future of the country and for the mission of the Church.

The Challenges of Faith-Education

Fr Lorenzo Fernando

TODAY we are living in a world where there are more questions than answers, more problems than solutions. We hear of violent demonstrations in Punjab, violent agitations in Gujarat, riots in Delhi... In the midst of these events questions are raised: Where is God ? Is He really in our history ? Does He speak to us ? What does He say ? How to recognize it, decipher it, translate it, interpret it ? The second Vatican Council says that it is the task of the Church "to decipher authentic signs of God's presence and purpose in the happenings, needs and desires" of the people.[1] The Council goes further to say: "It is the task of the entire people of God, especially pastors and theologians, to hear, distinguish and interpret the many voices of our age and judge them in the light of the divine Word."[2] It also speaks about the "signs of the times" which the Church has to discern and interpret in the light of the Gospel, in order to respond in an intelligible language to the perennial questions which people ask.[3]

In this context the question is: how does the Church fulfil this task ? The General Catechetical Directory says that it is especially through the ministry of the Word, the catechetical ministry of faith-education, that the events and experiences of human life are interpreted by the community in the light of the Gospel. The Directory says:

> Catechesis should be concerned with making men attentive to their most significant experiences, both personal and social; it has also the duty of placing under the light of the Gospel the questions which arise from those experiences, so that there may be stimulated among men a right desire to transform their ways of life.[4]

Therefore, the catecthelieal ministry or the ministry of faith-education is basically a prophetic mission, a hermeneutical function and a service of the discernment and interpretation of God's on-going revelation in our own history, in order to give meaning to the present and orientation for the future. Here we have to insist on the interpretative function of faith-education. In human life the events and experiences need to be interpreted. An experience speaks and takes

1. *Gaudium et Spes*, 11.
2. *Ibid*, 44.
3. Cf. *ibid*, 4
4. *General Catechetical Directory*, 74.

[illegible]

on life only if it is interpreted; otherwise it remains mute. [illegible] pretation is more than a rational explanation. In our [illegible] there is an abundance of rational and scientific explanations, but [illegible] lack interpretations which disclose the meaning of reality. While [illegible] asks the question 'why', we give answer to the question 'how' [illegible] presenting rational and scientific explanations. We avoid the questi 'why' because it demands an interpretation which will ultimate challenge our life.

In the context of faith-education, the interpretation we speak (is not any kind of interpretation, but one that goes back to God intervention in the Christ-event. In a world dominated by science an scientific explanations, faith-education should not be a gimmick whic catechists use in order to sell their goods at a time when Christianit is not in great demand; nor should it be a life-boat enabling people t survive the storm. It should be essentially a service rendered to peopl whose human condition is threatened. Bogged down as man is by s many rational explanations, he cannot, in fact, arrive easily at inte pretations that genuinely reveal the meaning and significance of event and happenings. All this gives animators of faith-education a grea opportunity and a challenge to take up this interpretative and propheti function.

Faith-Education and Other Educative Processes

In light of all that we have said about the function of catechesis we need to distinguish the process of faith-education from other type of educative processes. 1) First, faith-education cannot be reduced t the mere teaching of doctrine, though faith-education has a doctrina dimension. In so far as any doctrine is a thematic expression of th faith-experience in a particular historical and cultural context, a animator of faith-education cannot remain satisfied with making other learn doctrines.Rather he or she must enable them to give new expres sions of their own faith-experience in their cultural context. 2) Secondly faith-education cannot be identified with the process of socialization Socialization is the process by which individuals learn to perform social roles which are already fixed culturally and traditionally; i aims at preserving and maintaining socio-cultural norms, and gives no scope for creativity and transformation. Faith-education aims at criti cal evaluation, creativity and transformation. It has to arous conversion on the part of the individuals and change in the socia structures. 3) Thirdly, faith-education should not be reduced to th transmission of cultural elements identified with religious faith. I other words, faith-education does not mean adapting to Western cul

ture with which Christianity is wrongly identified. As *Evangelii Nuntiandi* clearly points out, the Gospel is not identical with any culture, though it has to take root in all cultures.[5] Faith-education has to go along with inculturation and it should enable the members of the Christian community to express their faith-experience in their own culture. In *Catechesi Tradendae*, Pope John Paul II states:

> We can say of catechesis. . that it is called to bring the power of the Gospel into the very heart of culture and cultures. For this purpose, catechesis will seek to know these cultures and their essential components; it will learn their more significant expressions; it will respect their particular values and riches.[6]

He says further, "Genuine catechists know that catechesis 'takes flesh' in the various cultures and milieux."[7] In our context, therefore, faith-education should enable us to express our faith-experience in Indian cultural patterns and symbols. 4) Fourthly, faith-education must not be an instrument to justify an ideology in order to maintain and perpetuate the status quo for the benefit of the few at the expense of others. In fact, faith-education is meant to proclaim the message of liberation and salvation and to enable the individuals to liberate themselves from such ideologies, by fulfilling an interpretative, critical and prophetic function. 5) Fifthly, faith-education is not a blind transmission of popular religiosity, with all its superstitions. Regarding popular religiosity, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* has this to say:

> It is often subject to penetration by many distortions of religion and even superstitions. It frequently remains at the level of forms of worship not involving a true acceptance by faith. It can even lead to the creation of sects and endangers the true ecclesial community.[8]

In fact, faith-education has to enable us to make a discernment between the elements of faith and those of superstition with regard to popular religiosity. Referring to popular devotions, *Catechesi Tradendae* says:

> Underlying most of these prayers and practices, besides elements that should be discarded, there are other elements which, if they are properly used, could serve very well to help people advance towards knowledge of the mystery of Christ and of his message.[9]

Therefore, faith-education should enable the members of the Christian community to discard the elements of superstition and profit by what is valuable for their growth in faith.

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5. Cf. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 20.
6. *Catechesi Tradendae*, 53.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 48.
9. *Catechesi Tradendae*, 54.

Theology and Faith-Education

So far we have distinguished and differentiated faith-education from other educative processes. Now we need to note the relation between theology and faith-education. Theology is a systematic and critical reflection on our life situation in the light of revelation and faith. The recent statement of the Indian Theological Association says:

> Theology, therefore, consists in critical reflection on our lived experience of reality in a given community with its own culture and traditions, its historical adventures, its struggles and hopes in the light of God's revelation taken in its totality.[10]

In short, theology remains in the realm of reflection. But catechesis or faith-education has to function in the realm of action. If theology aims at reflection, faith-education aims at conversion. However, there can be no faith-education without theology, and theology will remain fruitless if there is no faith-education. Hence theology and faith-education are interdependent though they are not the same. In this connection we should note that future priests and religious do theology in order to become animators of faith-education. Normally faith-education can be given only to those who have an initial faith, i.e., those who have had some faith-experience. The future animators of faith-education should be those who not only have had faith-experience, but also reflect on their life situation in the light of faith and revelation. Therefore, the future animators of faith-education should not look upon theology merely as an academic requirement, but as an existential and pastoral need.

The specific aim of faith-education is to enable the individuals to grow towards the maturity of faith. So it is expected of the animators to have themselves a mature attitude of faith so as to be able to help others in the process of maturation of faith. This, in fact, is the great challenge thrown to us by the ministry of faith-education. Now we shall focus our attention on the characteristics of a mature attitude of faith.

Characteristics of Mature Faith

As we know from social psychology, an attitude is built up by continuous experiences. An attitude of faith is built up by a continuous experience of faith and conversion. Just as each experience is composed of cognitive, affective and operative elements, so also an attitude is constituted by cognitive, affective and operative components. In other words, the mature attitude of faith has its intellectual, affective and operative dimensions.

10 Document, "Theological Education in India Today" VIDYAJYOTI 49 (1985) p. 196.

A. — In the *intellectual dimension*, the mature attitude of faith is characterized by deep knowledge, rational grounds, critical evaluation, discernment and flexibility. First, a person of mature faith has a deep awareness and a profound knowledge of faith, and he never remains at a superficial level. Secondly, he can give reasons and offer a rational foundation for his faith. He believes, not because he has been asked by his parents and others to do so, but because he is convinced of his faith and has reasons for it. Thirdly, the mature attitude of faith is marked by the capacity to be critical, and self-critical, having as its basis the prophetic and judgemental Word of God; and making a responsible use of the human instruments of evaluation. In this connection, G. W. Allport says:

> The individual who is on the way to maturity probably will repudiate both the oversimplified product of his earlier egocentric thinking, and blind conformity to institutional and parental views. He discovers that the literal-minded and second-hand faith that he previously held now needs emendation. He sees the evasion and escapist dangers of his original beliefs He perceives the shortcomings of tradition even while he appreciates its virtues.[11]

In these statements of Allport we find that the critical evaluation, assimilation and integration of the past is a characteristic mark of a mature faith. Fourthly, a person of mature faith is capable of discernment; he distinguishes between the essential and the secondary, the immutable and the contingent, the central and the peripheral, certainty and opinion. He recognizes the hierarchy of values and the hierarchy of truths. Fifthly, the mature attitude of faith is marked by flexibility. It makes room for a fresh articulation of one's faith-experience without distorting the essential content of faith. A person of mature faith will be ready to revise and change the ways and means of living his life of faith. Such a flexible attitude of a mature faith is opposed to the rigidity of a religious life which, under the appearance of fidelity, hides the dangers of immobility and intolerance. In other words, excessive rigidity, immobility and intolerance indicate a lack of maturity in the attitude of faith. So far we have seen the characteristics of the mature attitude of faith as regards its intellectual dimension.

B. — In its *affective dimension*, the mature attitude of faith is characterized by motivational autonomy, creativity, long-term commitment and openness to dialogue. First, a mature faith is marked by a motivational autonomy, which means that the faith becomes the motivational force or the source of all motivations for action. In other words, faith does not become subservient to needs, desires and instincts, but remains the master motive of everything. The matura-

11 G. W ALLPORT, *The Individual and his Religion*, New York 1974, pp. 67-68.

[illegible] of Christian faith is always accompanied by [illegible] maturity, which implies [illegible] and acceptance of [illegible] of one's social role, affective autonomy, etc. A person of mature faith is capable of freely making a gift of himself and is able to acknowledge and accept others as they are and love them for what they are. This, indeed, is a sign of human maturity. When there is no motivational autonomy in the attitude of faith, a person's faith is reduced to a mere functional religiosity, which means that one's faith is expected to perform any of those functions attributed to religion by the social sciences. For example, the function of "tension-management". It is the function of religion to reduce the tensions resulting from problems which remain unresolved. But, in fact, a mature attitude of faith confronts problems in view of resolving them. Persons who feel insecure or frustrated sometimes take refuge in functional religiosity, or sometimes even in religious life, to look for an answer to their unresolved problems. For the mature attitude which has motivational autonomy, faith becomes the source and force of all actions in one's life situation in the midst of all problems. Secondly, mature faith in its affective dimension is marked by creativity and changeability. It is creative in the sense that a mature faith is a continuous spring of new motivations, interpretations and initiatives. A person of mature faith has no fear of change; he does not become immobile or conformist but, on the contrary, he places himself under the movement of the Spirit, who is the endless source of life and renewal. Thirdly, the mature attitude of faith is steady and capable of assuming long-term commitment. It is steady in the sense that a man of mature faith does not become over-enthusiastic at times and discouraged at other times, but carries on his task steadily; and his commitment endures for long. Fourthly, a man of mature faith is always open to dialogue and confrontation. He feels neither self-sufficient nor intolerant. He does not escape from confrontation with different cultures and ideologies. He rather feels the need of this in order to purify and enrich himself. He is always capable of holding a dialogue at the ecumenical or the inter-religious level. While opening himself to dialogue with non-believers, a man of mature faith never feels threatened as regards his identity. When there is a lack of openness to dialogue and confrontation with others, authoritarianism, intolerance and prejudice will be the consequence; and in this case faith degenerates into an ideology which justifies one's lack of openness.

C. — Now as regards the *operative dimension* of mature faith, we note that the attitude of faith is dynamic and active; it integrates

[illegible]

[illegible] life. The [illegible] of faith is [illegible] in the [illegible] source of [illegible] and we cannot think of a mature faith [illegible] It [illegible] faith into action.

The mature attitude of faith integrates faith and life. In other words, it brings about a profound harmony between the professed faith and the lived faith, between reflection and action, between plans and activities. A man of mature faith acts according to his discernment and conviction, he feels a sense of unity between the intellectual, affective and operative dimensions of faith. Feeling a sense of unity and harmony within himself, a person of mature faith experiences interior joy. He is in fact, an integrated personality

The Challenges of Faith-Education

We have so far seen the characteristics of the mature attitude of faith in all its dimensions It goes without saying that every animator of faith-education needs to have a mature attitude of Christian faith in order to lead others towards this maturity Christian values or the values of the Christian faith are not floating over and above human values but they are integrated into and complementary to them. We cannot think of mature faith without a corresponding human maturity

In conclusion therefore we as animators of faith education are constantly challenged to have a deep knowledge of, and give a rational foundation to it with a spirit of discernment and readiness to change We are challenged to have a faith that is motivationally autonomous and creative with an enduring commitment and openness to dialogue With all these challenges our faith has to be dynamic and active bringing about a harmony between conviction and action Finally in the midst of the current problems and changing situations of our country the greatest of all the challenges thrown to us by faith education is the challenge to become prophets of God s present revelation not only by reflection but by action not only by our words but by our deeds because revelation takes place by words and deeds *

*Fr Lorenzo FERNANDO teachs Systematic Theology at the Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune

Forum

The Trinitarian Model

In the June-July issue of VIDYAJYOTI I read with interest the article of the lay theologian Josantony Joseph "Is Co-Responsibility Possible in Our Church?" I found his interpretations of the various models of ecclesiology very enlightening, and full of practical applications. Since he asks for some feedback, I send my reactions to his article and my interpretation of similar models for the understanding of the Mystery of the Church, especially in relation to the problem of the vocation and mission of the laity in the Church, which is the theme for the 1987 synod of bishops.

Josantony presents three models of the Church the pyramid model, the concentric circles model and the inverted crown or multiple funnel model, the first being the model of the pre-Vatican ecclesiology and the other two of the Vatican II ecclesiology The models illustrate the different conceptions of the Church and of the mission of its members But I find in the documents of Vatican II a better model, which is rooted in the very nature of the Church as a "Mystery", namely the Trinitarian model This model is clearly presented in many documents of the Council, but in particular in *Lumen Gentium* nn 2-4, where the words of St Cyprian are quoted, describing the Church as the "People of God gathered together in the unity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit " It is true that in some documents the Council seems to forget this model to return to the pyramidal idea of "society" It is also true that in other documents the consequences of this Trinitarian model have not always been drawn But the fact remains that this is the central model of the conciliar Christocentric ecclesiology

1 *The Mystery of the Church Derives from the Mystery of God*

It has often been said that the main problem for Christianity and other religions today is about the "images of God", namely the "models of God" If God is conceived and presented in a monotheistic or even Christo-monistic way, naturally the Church will be conceived as a perfect spiritual society Actually, the first Vatican Council relied on such a picture of God in its declarations against materialism, pantheism, monism, etc The natural conclusion was the model of a Church seen as a spiritual *society* to foster religion and to help men to glorify God and attain salvation Thus the pyramidal model of the Church derives from the monotheistic conception or model of God.

But Vatican II has given us the Christian conception of Triune God who is in love with us, a Father who sends His Son to make us His

children through the power of His Spirit. This Triune God is dynamically present in the Church, His own People, sharing His life and love with all the members and calling all to constitute His human-divine family. Now this Trinitarian model of God will naturally call for a "communion-model" of the Church as the created image of the Trinitarian community.

2. *The Trinitarian Model*

According to Christian Revelation, God is triune or tripersonal: The Father gives Himself totally to His Son, and Father and Son are united in the bond of love, which is the Spirit. If we adopt the images of some Fathers of the Church, the Holy Spirit is the "feminine or maternal" Person, the "We" of Father and Son, the source of life and love that ultimately constitutes the Trinitarian community

We get a glimpse of this mystery of the immanent Trinity from the "economic" Trinity, namely from the self-revelation and self-communication of the Triune God in the history of salvation, which reaches its climax in the Paschal Mystery of Christ's death and resurrection, with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the constitution of the Church as the Body of Christ — the seed, sign and instrument of God's Kingdom here on earth (LG 5)

Now in the mystery of the Triune God as Love, we discern

(i) the community three Persons, equal in being, dignity and activity,

(ii) the missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit which are different, though intimately interconnected, since it is the Triune God who shares His own life and bliss with His creatures

There is perfect 'order" in the "processions" of the immanent Trinity, and consequently perfect "order and harmonious collaboration" between the mission of the Son and of the Spirit Thus we find the perfect equality of Persons in the diversity of functions or missions And since the Triune God is Love, both "processions" and "missions" are expressions of His Love a total self-emptying of each Person for a total self-giving, both within the Triune God and in their self-communication to humankind

3 *The Human Family*

The first created image or model of the Trinitarian community is the human family, for "man' has been created in the image and likeness of God [1] Here we find again

(i) a community where all the members are equal, all persons with their rights and duties,

(ii) diversity of functions father, mother and children There exists perfect order and harmony, with complementarity of functions, which are "services", namely concrete expressions of love, of mutual self-gift for the growth of its members

[illegible]

[illegible] themselves instead of giving themselves. The [illegible] against the others, the inferior position of women and the "rejection" of children are caused by sin, not willed by God!

4. *The Church as Communion*

In God's plan, humankind is called to form a "divine created family", the People of God, the Body of Christ, where all members are equal in dignity as children of the same Father, but with different functions for the growth of the whole Body. As a created image of the Trinitarian community, the Church of Jesus Christ is:

(i) a community of equals, and not a society of unequals—all the members of the People of God are equal in dignity and also activity (LG 10, 32),

(ii) with diversity of functions, of charisms, services and ministries; these charisms are gifts of the Holy Spirit for the growth of the community (1 Cor 12)

In the past, these charisms were often conceived as privileges dignities, powers, etc, and were identified with the hierarchical and clerical ministries or with the religious vocation, thereby creating states or classes within the Church. Thus in the pyramidal model of the Church we have three classes the hierarchy (clergy), the religious and the laity. But according to the Trinitarian model of the Church, all charisms are gifts of the Spirit or spiritual 'skills" for the service of the Church, and ministries are those charisms which are exercised on a stable basis and in response to the community's call. Charisms, therefore, as coming from the Spirit who is love, are gifts of love for service, for self-gift to the community. These charisms are bestowed upon all the members, according to the free will of God's Spirit and for the needs of the Church

These charisms, services and ministries do not make some members "superior' to others, more perfect than others, etc. According to the Council's teaching, there are no "states of perfection and salvation," but the call of all to the perfection of charity. Charisms, services and ministries offer to the members who exercise them the opportunity of loving and therefore of attaining Christian perfection

5 *Categories within the Ecclesial Community*

According to the Trinitarian model, the structure of the Church should no longer be conceived as a society constituted by three classes, the hierarchy or clergy, the religious and the laity. The second Vatican Council, followed by the Code of Canon Law, offers us a different structure *of* the Church as constituted by the hierarchy (clergy) and laity, and *in* the Church as constituted by religious and non-religious.

But the Trinitarian model of the Church offers us a better structure of the Church as a community, with charisms, services and ministries. All baptized belong to the one community of the People of God, all sharing in the one Priesthood of Jesus Christ, with the threefold prophetic, priestly and royal function. All are equal in dignity and activity, contributing to the building up of Christ's Body through their perfection of charity. The only "distinction in essence" (LG 10) is found on the level of charisms, services and ministries, which are not more or less perfect, superior or inferior, but only "different" for different services of the whole community.

Charisms are offered by the Spirit to the members of the Church. When these members freely accept and exercise them, they become services of the community; and when exercised on a stable basis, they are called ministries. These ministries can be (1) ordained: episcopate, presbyterate and diaconate; and (2) non-ordained or instituted through a commission or mandate by the Church: all other ministries. According to the Trinitarian model, these ministries are grouped into three main categories: clerical, religious and secular. Each group has its specific charisms and ministries, but the members of the Church can receive and exercise more charisms and services. Thus a cleric may receive charisms for secular ministries or for the witnessing of religious dedication. Likewise a secular may receive "clerical" charisms to be a lector and acolyte in the liturgical celebrations, or even a religious charism. It will depend on the Church to discern and organize or harmonize the different charisms, so that each member exercises as many as possible for the benefit of the whole People of God.

6. *Spiritual and Temporal Ministries ?*

Since all ministries derive from charisms of the Spirit for the service of the People of God in the fulfilment of its mission to spread God's Kingdom on earth, the temporal/spiritual dichotomy disappears, or it remains only within each person: every ministry is at once "spiritual", being Spirit-filled service of love, and also "temporal", through involvement in humanity and the world, for the establishment and spreading of God's Kingdom in the world of today. What matters, therefore, is not *what kind* of ministry one exercies, whether clerical, religious or secular, but *how* does one exercises his or her ministries or services: as Jesus exercised them, with docility to His Spirit, for the good of others; or for one's own dignity, name, prestige, power and glory !

The Christocentrism of the New Testament and of Vatican II calls for an incarnational spirituality, where there is no longer any separation between sacred and profane. Besides, the dynamic presence of the Triune God within the world as history of salvation, enables us to transform every activity as our response of faith and love to His self-gift to us through our self-gift to others. After all, the ministries of Jesus were mostly "secular": evengelization, healing, feeding the hungry, raising the dead, consoling the comforting the afflicted, forgiving sinners, showing mercy to the marginalised tax collectors and prostitutes, etc. We do not see Him performing any "sacred" ministry at the Temple.

And at the Last Judgement the norm or criterion for entering the eschatological Kingdom is based on works of mercy or "temporal" ministries (cf. Mt 25).

7. *Laicity or Laicality of the Whole Church*

The Trinitarian model has led postconciliar ecclesiologists to speak of the "laicity or laicality" of the whole Church. All baptised are members of the one People of God (*ho laos tou theou*); all have a spiritual or ecclesial vocation for service through the charisms bestowed on them by the Spirit, and all serve the community through involvement in the world. The sacraments of Christian initiation, namely baptism, confirmation and the eucharist, make Christians sharers in the one Priesthood of Jesus Christ with its threefold prophetic, priestly and royal functions The sacraments of holy orders and matrimony, just as religious profession, are "charismatic sacraments", namely, ontological relationships to Jesus Christ for specific services in the Church These sacraments do not confer any perfection, as given by the sacraments of Christian initiation they only confer the "powers" to exercise the charisms bestowed by the Holy Spirit for the building up of the Body of Christ.

In this perspective, we can say that all are "lay ministries" or ministries exercised by the members of the People of God, but they are differentiated according to the various charisms and are traditionally grouped into three main categories clerical, religious and secular What is specific, v g , of the "priestly ' or, better, "clerical" ministry of bishops, presbyters and deacons is the service of unifying and building up the community That is why bishops and presbyters preside over the eucharistic celebration, because the eucharist is the sacrament of unity and the builder of the community All Christians, as sharers in the one Priesthood of Jesus Christ, celebrate the sacrifice of our Redemption, but only the bishop or presbyter "sacramentalizes" or makes visible and present the invisible, but real, sacrificial action of Christ in His Paschal Mystery The whole community celebrates the eucharist, but the service or ministry of the president is different from those of religious and lay people who participate as lectors, acolytes, cantors, servers, etc

8 *The Trinitarian Model and the Postconciliar Church*

The main problems in the Church today seem to be the People's Church, collegiality, and the relation between the local and the universal churches Now these problems find a solution in the Trinitarian model of the Church

The People's or "popular" Church is not a democratic assembly, but a theocratic community, with its source and goal in the Triune God who is Love. The Church becomes the sacrament of the Trinitarian community, with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit really and actively present in the Christian community for the realization of the project of salvation The Church is truly God's Kingdom on earth because the Father is "ruling" i e loving and serving the Church as His own

People through His incarnate and glorified Son by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Trinitarian model shows the Church to be not an anarchy, but a theocracy or a "trinocracy"!

As for ecclesial collegiality, this is rooted in the Trinity, who is a "college" or community of equals with different functions or missions. Collegiality, therefore, is for the perfection of the Church, which is a living and charismatic organism, not a building or a museum, to be preserved or restored! The hierarchical collegiality derives from the hierarchical charisms, the Pope being endowed with the specific charism exercised in the Petrine ministry. But ecclesial collegiality should extend to the whole community; hence, it is not only hierarchical, but also clerical, religious and secular, all the members sharing in the one mission of the Church according to their specific charisms.

Finally, the local churches constitute the universal Church and manifest its catholicity. There should be no opposition, competition or conflict between the various churches, but only communion in complementarity. Just as in the Triune God there is no monopoly or centralization in the Father, but a shared self-gift to the world through the missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit, likewise in the Church of Christ there should be no monopoly or centralization of powers or services, but shared charisms and services for the building up of the Body of Christ. Each church is bestowed special charisms by the Spirit for the incorporation of the local, cultural and religious values into the one, catholic Church of Christ. When local churches are allowed and even encouraged to discern and exercise their specific charism, the whole Body of Christ is enriched and the process of "Christification" of humankind and the whole world is being realized.

Concluding these reactions I would say that the Trinitarian model, as given us in the main documents of Vatican II, offers us the key to the understanding of the mystery of the Church as a charismatic and ministerial community, as People of God and institution, as Body of Christ and created image of the Trinitarian community. This model is being realized in the Basic Ecclesial or Christian Communities which have sprung up in many parts of the world and which constitute the hope for the real implementation of the second Vatican Council, with a radical renewal and reform of the Church, making it truly apostolic, the spotless Bride of Christ, as the great Pope John XXIII envisioned it.

V. Piovesan, S.J.

Note

Christian-Muslim Relations Today: Difficulties and Prospects

The 'Copernican Revolution' in Christian-Muslim Relations

The recent visit to Marocco by Pope John Paul II on August 19 was glorified by the Maroccan News Agency as "an Islamo-Christian summit of great spiritual importance" It was the first official visit of the Head of the Catholic Church to an Arab Muslim country with Islam as state religion It included a public meeting with the Muslim youth. This and previous frequent meetings of the Pope with representative groups of Muslims, not only in countries of the traditional Muslim world but also in Black Africa and Europe, are a clear indication that Christian-Muslim relations have definitely altered since Vatican II They can hardly ever return to what they have been before for centuries

Both communities of faith today have become present to one another on a world-wide scale Both are universalistic in religious essence Both see human beings as potential members of their own community and invite each and everyone to membership Both communities have entered the post-colonial phase of existence, notwithstanding the realities of neo-colonialism and neo imperialism which continue to condition the mutual perceptions of large sections of the Christian and Muslim communities

The Catholic Church has — above all in paragraph three of the Vatican II Declaration *Nostra Aetate* — sealed a kind of Copernican Revolution' in Christian-Muslim relations and in this has been accompanied by most Protestant Christian Churches The Council resolutely focussed on what binds Christians and Muslims together, at the level of doctrine, moral teaching and spiritual striving, and asked Christians and Muslims to cooperate on this basis, in the service of a better future for all humankind The Council adopted the approach of the half-full rather than the half-empty glass Hence, basic and important differences were not mentioned, and such central issues as the place of the life and person of Muhammad in Islam, the ascetical-mystical component of the Muslim life, as well as the basic concepts and ideals of the *uma* (the community of Muslim believers) were passed over in silence

In the years since Vatican II we have witnessed countless meetings of Christians and Muslims at all levels, including consultations of regional bishops' conferences in Africa, Asia and Europe, and a plethora of letters, resolutions and recommendations either to the local churches or to Christians and Muslims alike There has also taken place a considerable growth of relevant publications and of solid training programmes, often promoted and realized by newly-established centers for the study of Islam and of Christian-Muslim relations.

The Muslim Response

Thus, the Christian Churches — the activities of certain fundamentalist groups to the contrary notwithstanding — have made a remarkable effort to come closer to Islam But can one also speak of Islam drawing closer to the Church ? The answer is neither easy nor clear-cut. One has to distinguish between persons and institutions, intellectuals and the un- or little-educated, between Arab, African, South-Asian and South-East Asian Islam, between Islam in minority as in Europe and the Republic of India, for instance, and Islam in majority as in all Islamic states, above all, between the different sects and movements and the different basic attitudes and concepts underlying each one of them

Wherever efforts have been made towards a better understanding at the level of the dialogue of life, i e, in the every-day meeting of Christians and Muslims in family, neighbourhood, constituency, farm, factory, hospital and school, we can observe a whole range of positive and negative attitudes On the one side, mutual respect, trust and the readiness to share, a discernible increase in neighbourliness, expressed, for instance, in the exchange of gifts and of best wishes on the occasion of major feasts, and an interest in understanding the religious practices and religious motivations of the other On the negative side, the persistence of self-deceiving self-centeredness and self-righteousness, distrust, rejection of any kind of pluralism, jealousy and fear of the 'success' of the other, a sectarian attitude, not allowing the other to differ, rivalry, proselytism and one-sided demands At close range it becomes evident how difficult it remains for both sides to abdicate the striving for superiority in numbers and power, to make the necessary inner efforts to treat the other side without bias and with empathy, with the same fairness as one treats the members of one's own religious group.

As to organized, official religious dialogue, we first observe that there were gestures of striking openness and warmth on the part of individuals, institutions and states, and many of these came about through Muslim initiative Nevertheless, for the last few years these encounters have clearly decreased The annual Vatican message of greeting and felicitation on the occasion of the Feast of the Breaking of Fast at the end of the month of Ramadan (Idul Fitr) was received by many individuals in Africa, Asia and the Americas with sympathy and not rarely reciprocated on the occasion of Christmas Yet, it evoked little response on the part of the great Islamic organisations For a number of years now, Islam shows a harsher, more self-confident and nationalistic face The emphasis lies on striving after power and political influence

In short, whereas many Muslims are truly glad about the conciliar and post-conciliar attitude of the Church towards Islam and the Muslims as a totality, they are far from decisively turning towards the Christians. One reason for this sobering fact certainly is the difference between the two partners in dialogue, especially regarding their uneven state of theological development. Mohammed Talbi, the renowned Tunisian

historian, has spoken repeatedly about the lag in theological development which results in hesitation, reserve and distrust on the part of the Muslim partner in dialogue:

> A considerable problem is posed by the uneven theological development. On the one hand, Christian theology — especially again since the enlightenment and the rise of the critical historical disciplines — has developed in critical response to the intellectual challenges it had to face and has thus constantly developed and renewed itself. Thus it has become more capable of dialogue precisely through facing its own crises. So it can offer well-qualified partners in Christian-Muslim dialogue and can call upon true scholars in Christian-Muslim questions.
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> ("Islam und Dialog", *Cibedo Documentation*, no. 10, p. 7.)

In contrast, the great Muslim schools of theology, as, e.g., al-Azhar in Cairo or Deoband in India, teach a theology which for all practical purposes has ceased to evolve since the twelfth century. Muslim theology, after its brilliant phase of early scholasticism, when it responded to the challenges of Greek philosophy and Christian theology, for various reasons hardly ever met with the challenge of the kind of philosophical critique, modern historiography and its critical methods, psychology and economics and sociology which arose in the modern West and mark profoundly the modern world. Hence, the Muslim world can count only on a very small number of truly competent "occidentalists", that is, specialists in the field of the study of Christianity and of the foundations of Western civilization.

The Basic Difficulty

The question persists however. If, on the level of creed and of theological doctrine, there are in fact such important similarities and areas of agreement as, for instance, the belief in the God of Abraham, the image of man as God's creature, the acceptance in faith of a divinely revealed law, the foundation of society on a divine order and the expectation of an eternal reward, why does Islam have this enormous difficulty of opening itself to the Church's offer to dialogue — on the basis of those common beliefs, faith attitudes and moral and spiritual ideals which, after all, have each one of them, a foundation in the Quran, prior to all differentiations into sects and schools ?

The true cause seems to be this: the great principles common to Christianity and Islam and their ethico-social implications in daily life are not understood and interpreted in the same way. This is so because both religions have different religious roots, Jesus of Nazareth and Muhammad of Mecca. The same could be said of the Jewish religion with regard to Moses. As the whole religious reality of Christianity is permeated by the historical personality of Jesus as mirrored in the faith of the Gospels and the New Testament writings, or, to put it differently, as Christian faith and practice again and again have to take as its paradigm Jesus' life and teaching and ultimately the mystery of his passion, death and resurrection, in a comparable way is the reality of Islamic doctrine of faith and religious practice shaped by the life and teaching of Muhammad as perceived in the light of the faith in the Quranic revelation. The basic Muslim paradigm is determined by

Muhammad's own distinct character and career, which is deeply marked by his migration from Mecca (*hijra*) and political achievement in Medina

So we have the absolute and purely transcendent God of the Islamic faith on the one side and the one and three-personal God of self-communication of the Christian faith on the other The Holy Law (*shari'a*) of Islam, revelatory and all-comprehending in character, contrasts with the Christian teaching of unconditional service and love of neighbour, which breaks the old Law and establishes the "new Law of the Spirit" In Islam man and woman, "servants" or "vicegerents" of God, are called to be obedient to the Will of God as it is believed to have been definitely revealed in the Quran, whereas the Christian faith conceives of man and woman as the image of God, called to be adopted as children of God in Christ in the Spirit In Islam human rights are viewed as dictated and sealed by the *shari'a*, whereas Christian doctrine teaches them to be implanted into every human being The Islamic ideal or utopia of one society, to be united and guided by a theocratically conceived Law, markedly differs from the modern Christian concept according to which society is haped by the distinction of the religious and political spheres of life The ever new experience of such deep-going differences in basic beliefs and attitudes puts the willingness to go out to the other in dialogue and collaboration to a serious test

Dialogue in Faith and with Discernment

It is not surprising then, that some tend to confine the scope for dialogue to the secular, strictly human dimensions of life, whereas others declare dialogue with Muslims as simply impossible from the outset But today, after the event of Vatican II and in the light of the example set by the Popes Paul VI and John Paul II in applying the Council's teaching on Christian-Muslim relations, it does not seem any longer legitimate for Christians to separate themselves spiritually from Islam, to ignore its historical-religious dimension or even to return to the old confrontation and polemic The spirit of the Gospel summons us to view the Muslims with respect and sympathy and to try to make out patiently all the possible ways of knowing them better, establishing contacts with them as believers and collaborating with them in promoting the common good

This does not exclude but rather implies and demands prudence and the development of the faculty of true discernment We are asked, in other words, in the spirit of justice and love, palpable among us in Jesus the risen Lord, to open ourselves to all that is good and true in the faith and life of the Muslims, individually and corporately, and to promote it Thus we will be instruments of the "Kingdom" which the Church is called to make visible and to build up effectively It is the "Kingdom" which is at work everywhere, in the true "seekers" of all cultures and religions, especially in those belonging to the Abrahamic family of monotheistic faiths The faith in the divine plan for history and the Christian conviction that God is ever at work in "reconciling and uniting all things in Christ", are an unquenchable source for the hope in a gradual coming together of humankind, in diversity.

However, it is also part of the dialogue and of mutual responsibility that Christians voice criticism and resist wherever, in the name of Islam, political aims and legal measures are promoted which contradict the dignity and the equal rights of human persons, irrespective of religious or ideological affiliation Christians and Muslims are called to witness to the truths and values they share From here arises the task to determine clarify widen and explain the common normative frame of theology anthropology and eschatology and to draw from there concrete conclusions for life and action for instance in the area of human rights, bioethics questions of environment and peace Do we sufficiently appreciate — in the light of the present day Western and potentially world wide civilization and its relativistic and this worldly utilitarian vision of reality — the value of the shared conviction in faith that the basic values of life are anchored in the absoluteness of the personal and transcendent God of whom the human person is the 'image and the "vicegerent ? Must it not be the sacred task of Christian Muslim dialogue to point out to the wider world the true foundations of the dignity and liberty of the human person of his and her rights and duties, in such a way that the absolute and transcendent divine Mystery may shine forth effectively in the life of society ?

We agree with Mohammed Talbi when he states

> The dialogue is a long drawn out test of patience If it succeeds bringing about a gradual rapprochement if it can in the long run replace mutual disinterest or friendly reserve by genuine friendship and even true brotherliness — despite persisting differences in beliefs and considered opinions — it would be a great gain To engage in dialogue does not mean necessarily to look for common solutions or even to find by all possible means a consensus The scope of dialogue would rather seem to be to contribute clarity and openness to the debate and to enable the participants to grow beyond themselves instead of basking in isolation and false security The road to the realm of light will be long and God has chosen to shroud it in the veil of mystery
> (Islam und Dialog" *loc cit* 29)

Christian W TROLL, S J

Correspondence

Psalms of Revenge

Dear Editor,

The comments made by various readers in your journal on the so-called "Psalms of Revenge" have provoked me to make the following observation.

If the psalms have been incorporated into the Bible by the Church and are regarded by her as God's Word, it is proper for us to reflect what is really revealed by God through such psalms. To me personally they appear to reveal at least two things of what genuine prayer is about·

1. It is certainly not the spirit of vindictiveness that is revealed but the spirit of *honesty* that should characterise prayer The psalmist is not ashamed of his/her real feelings in the presence of God who cannot be deceived. Anger and indignation at downright injustice must be uninhibitedly expressed before God — this is true of all other feelings and inner disturbances, however ugly they may seem to us and to others — or else our prayer is both a self-deception and an unsuccessful attempt at bluffing God (does this not happen in shared prayer in which we usually express sentiments geared to making an impression on others rather than to stripping ourselves naked before God ?).

2 The second element as Fr Cherian's remarks is difficult for the unoppressed to understand We, who are cushioned by that species of security which our vow of poverty and/or our clerical state amply provides us with, do not and simply *cannot* savour the profound implication of the axial theme of biblical revelation "God's covenant (defence pact) with the poor" Those who are in a hopeless/helpless situation, victimized by the oppressive greed of conscienceless men and women, do realise by instinct that there is justice eternally available to those who cry for it. This is the spirituality, the faith and the religious praxis of the poorest of the poor anywhere in the world whether they are Christian or non-Christian.

What the Bible does is to make explicit a universally and implicitly revealed truth. The psalmist quite rightly understands God as the vindicator of the oppressed and that is why he is at such liberty with his God He really understands and experiences the God of the Bible If we recoil from such a notion of God, it is because we are on the wrong side of the fence When we are violently deprived of our power, property and prestige we interpret such just visitations of God as atheistic/Marxist/ anti-Christian persecution of the church etc !

Tulana,
Gonawala, Kelaniya
Sri Lanka

ALOYSIUS PIERIS, S.J

Book Notices

The Teachings of Vatican II. The Constitution on the Church (Summarized and Simplified for Group Study) Chps II, IV, V, VII. Second Edition (English and Hindi) *Patna, Navjyoti Niketan*, 1985. 50 paise each.

Navjyoti has made available these 8 booklets (4 in Hindi and 4 in English, with an average of 12 pages for English and 15 pages for the Hindi booklets) to help lay people especially to deepen their understanding of the Church, the lay person in the Church, the universal call to holiness, and genuine devotion to Mary, the Mother of the Church. Each booklet has a series of questions as well as the simplified-summarized text of the relevant chapters of this important document on the Church

Prayers in Large Print. By Rita SNOWDEN *London, Fontana Press, Fount Paperback* Pp. 127. £ 2 50

This book is pervaded by a Christian woman's mature sense of God Written for older men and women (in large print) this is the type of prayer book which nourishes prayer and leads us away from "saying" prayers There are three parts The simple and profound prayers for morning and evening of each day of a month, with a small scripture reading account for 97 pages There is a short collection of words of strength for the sleepless, and a few verses from the psalms for the five Sundays of a month The book concludes with fine prayers for special occasions

What is striking is the way the author reaches out into the world of nature and modern society, her deep and mature familiarity with the Father, and the variety of attitudes she takes before God Joy, peace, serenity and realism pervade the prayers. Many older people will find this a book for prayer The prayers are not to be 'read'. They are to be quiet, slow outpouring of hearts aware of the world, matured by life and turned to God. Many may be familiar with other books of prayers and others writings of this authoress

A Prayer. By R. H. LESSER. *Bandra, St Paul Publications*, 1984. Pp. 103. Rs 8.

This book covers the usual subjects to be found in a traditional manual on prayer Each brief 'chapter' (there are 21) deals with one aspect. At first the author describes the types of prayer (adoration, thanksgiving.), and then prayer occassions· praying the Mass, the Sacrament of reconciliation, the Breviary, the Bible, and the Rosary The final sections cover aspects of prayer—meditation, e g , obstacles, growth, conditions of prayer, the Jesus prayer. . The peculiar characteristic is that the author writes the whole book in the form of prayer-conversations with the Lord (Jesus ? the Father ?). Some will find the book useful

Pastoral Care of Youth in Rural Africa. Edited by Roger TESSIER *Eldoret, Kenya, Gaba Publications* (Amecea Pastoral Institute, P O Box 908 Eldoret, Kenya), 1984. Pp. 74 $ 2 70

This booklet is a document prepared by the Meeting on African Collaboration (M A.C) for the standing committee of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar as a complement to an earlier booklet, *Young People in African Towns Their Pastoral Care* Both booklets belong to the series "Spear-heads". This series of short studies covers many areas of pastoral involvement and challenge in Africa. Along with the document the editor has included 25 pages of shared pastoral experiences in the area of rural youth (principally male) pastoral care with some notes on youth care. The M A.C. document describes· a. the situation, aspirations and needs of rural youth; b. the Church's pastoral activities for this group. This and other booklets could stimulate and inform Christians in India involved in pastoral responsibilities.

Bread Broken An Action Report on Food Crisis in Africa. By J G DONDERS (ed) *Eldoret Kenya Gaba Publications* 1984 Pp 56 $ 2 50

This booklet which depends on many much more substantial reports, has an informative purpose with the goal to ultimately stimulate Christian communities to action The booklet is like the developed outline for a long lecture. The author briefly describes the African famine situation and enumerates at some length the complex factors, natural man-made and historical behind the present famine situ ation He criticizes the governmental and political responses of the USA and ECC and the role of international corporations Finally he outlines the basis for a Christian response with suggestions for concrete political action We hope his use of his sources and the reflections on the economic factors are more scientific and reliable than the paragraph on the multiplication of loaves in the Gospels

P M MEAGHER S J

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